

# 魔法少女育成計画

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illustration  
マルイノ

ACES

Magical Girl Raising Project

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宝島社



# Mahou Shoujo Ikusei Keikaku

vol.08 - Aces

by Endou Asari

[Novel Updates](#)

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Illustrations

魔法少女育成計画  
magical raising project #05  
ACES







### GLASSIANNE

To see anywhere  
with her magical  
glasses

### BLUE BELL CANDY

To have magical  
candies that can change  
your emotions



### DARK CUTIE

To manifest shadows  
in reality



### MONOSHIRI MI-CHAN

To change objects  
by changing  
its syllables



### CQ ANGEL HAMMER

To speak to others in  
their heads







**ULURU**

To tell  
believable  
lies



**SORAMI  
NAKANO**

To see the contents of  
sealed things



**PREMIUM  
SACHIKO**

To make someone  
extremely lucky



**PATRICIA**

To have  
handcuffs that  
nullify Magical  
Skills

**ARMOR ARLIE**

To become stronger the more  
damage she takes





## PRINCESS DELUGE

To control the power  
of water



## PFLE

To possess a magical  
wheelchair

## SNOW WHITE

To hear the voices  
of people in distress



## SHUFFLIN II

To change her ability  
based on suits and numbers



## RIPPLE

To never miss a target with  
anything she throws



## SHADOW GALE

To upgrade any  
technological item

# Prologue

## ☆ Shadow Gale

Mamori Totoyama had been suspecting Kanoe Hitokouji for a long time now.

Every day, the doubt in her heart seemed to be increasing. It rose every morning, and Mamori would find herself wondering if Kanoe had been doing something else behind her back.

During breakfast, Mamori avoided eye contact with Kanoe as much as possible. However, it was impossible to hide her feelings from Kanoe.

Kanoe Hitokouji can read people, based on their facial expressions, their emotions. This isn't her power, this is a skill she's perfected.

Growing up in a manor, many people would often make false praises to Kanoe, only wanting to curry favor with her due to her family name.

Kanoe had learned how to distinguish the people who genuinely cared for her, and the people who only wanted to use her.

A skill she developed on her own, a useful skill, which meant that Mamori couldn't hide anything. Every movement, every word, every facial expression was used to find out what Mamori really meant in her words.

Not to mention, Mamori and Kanoe knew each other inside-out.

They were born roughly at the same time, they became close friends, and close family at the same time too.

Mamori was the only one that Kanoe was honest to, and that in itself was something that no other person had.

Both Mamori and Kanoe also had a secret. They were Magical Girls.

Mamori was the Magical Girl known as *Shadow Gale* . Kanoe was the Magical Girl known as *Pfle* .

Pfle was a high-ranking member of the Human Resources Division. Shadow Gale wasn't.

Because of this divide, there were plenty of things that Pfle was able to do that Shadow Gale wasn't clear of.

It doesn't mean she's stupid, though.

She knows that something's been off, even if she doesn't know exactly what's going on.

Recently, their manor had been attacked. As a result, the Land of Magic is conducting an investigation on Pfle's Manor.

An investigation implies that someone wanted to do something bad.

Mamori had already clued in that it was Pfle.

Pfle's plan, the Magical Girl Raising Project, involved creating Man-Made Magical Girls. This discovery could shake the very foundation of the Land of Magic.

All the more reason she has to make sure she doesn't get discovered.

Pfle reacted quickly to the Land of Magic investigating.

She had help. A Magical Girl that was capable of storing and altering memories. She utilized her skills to wipe any memory of her plans.

Beforehand, she already wrote down every draft and blueprint to her plans at creating Man-Made Magical Girls. She published those articles anonymously, and made sure that the world knew that it was possible.

With her memory clear of any of the events, her plans released to the public, and no connection that can be proven to be traced back to Pfle, her plan was sound.

Shadow Gale had an important role to play.

She had to keep Pfle's memories hidden. Pfle had entrusted her with it, and Shadow Gale was specifically told not to let it be shown to anyone.

"When this is all over, then return them to me," said Pfle.



In that moment, when she was all alone with all of Pfle's memories. Shadow Gale took a look inside the small blue orb.

She saw everything.

All of Pfle's plans, her memories, and the things that connected them. Shadow Gale understood the plan, and because she herself knew Pfle, she understood her motives.

Ever since the time that they've participated in the Clamberry tests, Pfle had been horrified of the callousness of the Land of Magic.

Clamberry, then Keek's game proved that the Land of Magic couldn't control their highest ranking officers. Their most powerful members.

When they both got memory wiped, Pfle had no recollection of any of these events, but during Keek's game, they got their memories back.

That's when Pfle made the dots connect, and when she began brewing her plan to take down the Land of Magic.

Her goal was a reformation. Her goal was a Land of Magic free from the bureaucratic mess and the impersonal chains of commands.

A Land of Magic where it would be harder for Magical Girls like Clamberry to commit death games.

A Land of Magic that didn't have to rely on faceless reports. A Land of Magic that's more personal, a Land of Magic that's safer.

The first step was the Man-Made Magical Girls. Creations free from Land of Magic restraints. Magical Potential didn't matter.

Access to become a Magical Girl, free from any factors outside your control.

Her goals were noble.

It wasn't wrong to want that.

What *was* wrong, however, was her methods. This was always the problem with Pfle. Her single-mindedness in achieving a goal that seems pure would often result in chaos with everything around her.

Pfle would sacrifice 98 Magical Girls if it meant protecting her family.

Pfle would never lie to Shadow Gale, and so what she often does is tell half-truths.

As Pfle gets closer to her goal, the cost becomes greater. What is the cost of noble goal, when the path is filled with chaos?

She needs to see that she's causing all of this death, she needs to be able to see that and not become too focused on what she's trying to achieve, that she doesn't realize the things she's throwing away.

Shadow Gale cares about Pfle, and she doesn't want her to fall.

She's held on to those memories for a few days.

In breakfast, Pfle's conversations with her are rather awkward. Because Pfle had no recollection of the things she's done, all she knew were some small details.

Nothing about her plan was known to Pfle herself. She knew that she was attacked, but not the reason.

At first, Shadow Gale thought that maybe Pfle might be able to stop herself, but she realized the seeds had already been sown.

Ever since their selection test by Clamberry, the seeds have already been sown. At that time, Pfle had almost lost Shadow Gale.

Shadow Gale had almost lost Pfle too once.

Despite everything, both cared for each other, and losing either of them would be hard on any of their psyche.

Shadow Gale hadn't talked to Pfle a lot. Something that probably confused and worried Pfle, because Pfle can sense that Shadow Gale herself was worried.

Eventually, she came to the conclusion that Pfle's nature won't change. Despite not knowing her original plan, Pfle will still move towards it.

So maybe it's best to not return the memories.

But how? Who to contact?



Shadow Gale didn't have many connections. She doesn't really make friends much, since she's never really needed to.

She couldn't really make good plans either, that was always Pfl's forte. Clantail?

No, Clantail should be left out of this. Clantail was a close friend to both Pfl and Shadow Gale. They both would visit her, and she truly cherished them both.

She can't see them like this.

She wants to be a zoologist. She wants to grow up. She deserves that. Clantail's been through so much, dragged into Keek's game at the young age of 14, losing her friends, gaining new friends.

If she saw that Shadow Gale and Pfl were having a fallout, if she knows what Pfl is capable of, if she were brought in to Shadow Gale trying to keep secrets from Pfl...

...No, it's best that she thinks Pfl and Shadow Gale are good friends, and good friends to her as well.

But then, who?

Then she remembered someone, apparently the Magical Girl that managed to stop Keek. Perhaps she can be trusted.

The Magical Girl Hunter, she was called. After some research, she found out that her real name was Snow White.

The one good thing about having Pfl as a close friend is the fact that she has access to a database containing most Magical Girls' data.

A quick search of Snow White and Shadow Gale received her Magical Phone's number.

Shadow Gale sent her a text. It was sealed.

This wasn't part of Pfl's plan. If it were anyone other than Shadow Gale, Pfl would make a countermeasure.

But Pfl trusts Shadow Gale with her life.

After all, a safer Land of Magic is safety for Shadow Gale as well. At her core, Pfler has one weakness.

She loves her family, and people who she considers part of her family.

She loved her grandfather, who passed away.

She loved Masked Wonder, who was an innocent soul back in the games.

She loved Clantail, and along with Shadow Gale, always looked out for her.

And of course, Shadow Gale herself. A close friend, forever loyal, and someone that Pfler wouldn't hesitate to risk her life for.

Pfler can't distrust Shadow Gale. It's mentally impossible for her to do so.

That's why Shadow Gale could get the drop on her back in the game. That's why Pfler never considered Shadow Gale a traitor in the game. That's also why Pfler trusted Shadow Gale with her memories.

Pfler would never distrust Shadow Gale, no matter what she did.

And now Shadow Gale was going to exploit it.

She had cold feet... But in the end, she sent the text to Snow White. She was certain this was the right path.

If this can save Pfler from herself, and if this can save the lives of every potential victim. It's worth it.

It's now been a few weeks after Shadow Gale has met with Snow White.

The Examination Division is still investigating Pfler's manor, as well as the Land of Magic, for who the source of the attacks were from.

Pfler called out Shadow Gale's name, and Shadow Gale rushed to the living room.

She still hasn't told Pfler anything.



On the room was a stranger. A Magical Girl with a police uniform. What seemed to be sirens on her feet as well.

“Shadow Gale, allow me to introduce you to our guest. Her name’s Patricia.”

“Hey there, pleasure to meetcha!” said Patricia.

“Hello... Um, My Lady, what is this?”

“She’ll be an escort.”

“Escort?” asked Shadow Gale.

“For protection.”

“From who?”

“Whoever attacked us.”

It was then that Shadow Gale realized that the entire Hitokouji manor was covered in bright yellow tape that said “DO NOT ENTER”.

Patricia merely winked at her.

# Chapter 1: Hot Start

## ☆ Fal

Every country has its origin story. Every government has a history. Every organization can be traced back.

Sure, with different groups, you get different histories.

Sometimes groups were formed out of like-minded people wanting to achieve some goal, whether noble or not, together.

Sometimes a group is formed because there's a big chunk of another group that split apart, creating the second group.

Sometimes a group is formed because a large member of one group overthrew the other, creating a different group.

No matter what kind of 'group' you are, country, organization, government, what have you, there's one thing they all have in common.

The formation of that group will be considered heroic.

The history will be biased to the victors and founders of that group.

Any and all negativity will be ommitted. If they aren't ommitted, they will be justified. If they aren't justified, it'll only be a small paragraph in a sea of accomplishments, a necessary evil. Put simply, you don't want to show off your bad side.

Was it a terrorism, or was it freedom fighters?

Was it a ruthless slaughter of a primitive culture against their will, or was it educating a primitive culture and elevating them to civilization?

Was it an expansion to new lands in search of resources, mowing down everything in your path, or was it an expansion to seek new lands to make home for your people?

Sometimes both are true.



You can't have a good and bad side in these things. Both sides will often have their detractors, and will have their supporters.

It's up to the reader of these histories to sort out facts from opinions.

If this rule of a biased history was true for all kinds of groups, then what about the history of the Land of Magic?

Fal was certain there were omissions, biases, half-truths.

However, the Land of Magic was formed long ago, and sifting through the inaccuracies and finding facts are hard.

Nonetheless, here's the official description.

Once, there lived the first human to learn magic. They were known as The First Mage. The First Mage was all-powerful, but they weren't omnipotent, nor were they omniscient.

So, with the Mage's all-powerful magic, he decided to bestow a concentration of magical energy to three people.

They were called the Sages. The Three Sages.

The First Mage taught the Sages everything he knew about magic, but also separated each Sage so that they could each do different things.

One Sage was more powerful at what they can do, but The First Mage was far more versatile in their knowledge of spells.

Combined, they helped the world.

However, people began to distrust them, mostly because of their use of magic and powers. The First Mage and the Three Sages then combined their powers and created a separate realm, away from humanity.

A place of refuge, where they can be accepted and work in peace to protect humanity, but also keep to themselves.

Their research brought them in contact with a variety of magical things, like fairies, animal-like creatures, and a variety of familiars.

Mascots, they called them. Clad with magical energy.

As the years went by, the world was in a state of peace. The Three Sages would do their best to help the world.

Satisfied, The First Mage left, never to be seen again.

It is then said that these Three Sages attempted to create helpers similar to how The First Mage created them.

This led to the creation of Magical Girls.

Magical Girls were created to help humanity. To protect them and nurture them. Eventually, organized ranks were created, and the Land of Magic as we know them today was formed.

Since then, Mascots, Magical Girls, and Mages have co-existed.

The Three Sages are still alive until now, but no one knows where the First Mage had gone.

Nobody really knew how the Sages work, as they don't tend to talk with most people. Fal also doubted that they're all pure good, as they were people, after all.

Many historical figures hailed as heroes had a dark side to them. The Sages should be no different.

However, the Sages being alive complicates it, as bias will be given towards them.

How the Sages stayed alive is also a strange topic. From what the Sages themselves said, or at least the so-called Sages, they live in new incarnations every few generations.

Do they actually reincarnate? How does that process work? Is that a figure of speech or was that literal?

Fal didn't really know.

What he does know, however, is the name and current incarnation of each Sage.

Shayta • Osk • Val • Mer. This Sage, leader of the Osk faction, had an incarnation that Snow White has faced before.

She was definitely not the heroic type.

It took a while for Fal to dig through the information, as she was a more secretive Sage, not keen on having her identity known, but it was confirmed.

Her latest incarnation was Grim Heart.

Grim Heart supposedly died in an accident after being arrested, just after the S-City incident. Both Fal and Snow White didn't believe it.

Their bodies weren't found, and their entire escort towards the prison was destroyed.

Can a Sage truly die? Was it that simple?

Not only that, a battle with Grim Heart caused many casualties. The only Land of Magic member that survived is Snow White.

Princess Deluge is out there somewhere, Marika Fukuroi is living her life as well.

So it made sense that Snow White suddenly received a text message.

A quick scan of the text message, and Fal found out it was sent from...

...Another Sage's incarnation.

Av • Lavchi • Puck • Valta. Current incarnation, Puk Puck.

The text message urged Snow White to come visit her manor in the Land of Magic. Regarding a request and an offer that she wants to make.

Since it's a request from a high ranking member, Snow White knew it was important. They both agreed to give it a shot.

Arriving at the manor, they didn't expect it to be so... large. A European styled manor, with a gigantic tree in the courtyard.

The tree even had a nameplate, Yggdrasil.

The mansion looked like something out of a renaissance era villa. Snow White was calm as always, and Fal would have her back.



When they entered the mansion, inside was... not what they were expecting.

The outside was European, the inside was completely Japanese. A traditional Japanese home, with a Tatami mat, sliding door, and everything like that.

However, the colors were bright and childlike. Blues and reds, large pillars, and decorations that gave the room a bright look.

Sitting in the desk in front of them.

A girl that looked like a kindergartner. Long, curly blonde hair that went to her feet, and an angelic looking face.

“Welcome! My name’s Puk Puck! Make yourself at home! Sit, sit! So glad you came by!” said the girl with a cute smile.

Snow White approached the chair and took a seat.

When she sat down, Fal noticed that Snow White’s heartrate began to increase. Her expression was still calm as always, however.

“So *you’re* the Snow White I’ve been hearing about! Wow, gotta say I feel bad not catching up to your stuff! I read up a bit on you before you came, hope that’s not rude of me.”

“Not at all. However, I’d like to know why I was summoned,” said Snow White.

“Ah, yes! About that! You fought one of my sisters, Grim Heart, right?”

“Fought is a loose term, there’s no way I could win in a straight fight. Not with what she could do,” said Snow White.

“Oh, don’t be so hard on yourself. What mattered is you won, right?”

“If you could call it a victory. We survived.”

“That’s exactly why I called you over! I’ve got a request and I think your skills as the Magical Girl Hunter would be *very* useful!”

“And what exactly do you want me to do?” asked Snow White.

Puk Puck rose up and jumped towards the table, standing on her small childlike form, face to face with Snow White.

Fal didn't know why, but it seems her words seemed trustworthy enough to give her a chance.

At the very least, she couldn't hurt Snow White.

"Straight to the point kinda gal, huh? Well... I'm not that kind of person. Very impersonal, rude, I don't like it. What I want is to become personally close with the people I work with! Isn't that better for everyone? Getting along and making friends? I wanna be your friend, Snow White. I wanna get to know *you* before you accept my job!" said Puk Puck, smiling as she sat closer to Snow White.

Snow White's heartrate began increasing again. Snow White didn't show it in her face, but Fal knew.

Then Fal detected the presence of a Magical Girl hiding behind the sliding door, just right behind Puk Puck.

"I think there's someone there, Pon!"

Snow White looked at Fal,

"Fal. Not now, okay."

Fal nodded, and shut off his stereoscopic form. He trusts Snow White's judgements. If this Puk Puck presented a threat, Snow White could read her and know beforehand.

"Oh, your mascot noticed someone. Come on out, Sorami, don't be shy!"

A Magical Girl came out, whose style is very... colorful.

Two long ponytails dropped down to her feet. Her right ponytail is blue-ish, her left one is pink-ish.

Cat paws dotted her hair, with a pixel-sprite in her head.

She also had pupils that had a plus and minus symbol, as well as a large bunny badge, and what seemed to be a handheld game.

She also seemed to have a lolipop in her mouth.

“Snow White, allow me to introduce you to one of my closest friends! This here’s Sorami Nakano! Sorami for short. Her ability is to see anything that’s sealed or closed. She’s good for intel! Snow, Sorami. Sorami, Snow!” said Puk Puck.

Sorami shook Snow White’s hand, “Heya!”

“A pleasure,” replied Snow White.

“Sorami’s a good girl, and best friends with Puk! As you can see, nobody here in my house is ever treated unfairly! I want to become personally close with whoever Puk works with, so I’d like to get to know you as well, okay? And if you have any problems, please let Puk know!” said Puk Puck.

Sorami looked at the two, “Um, sorry but, I’m in a bit of a hurry,” said Sorami.

“Oh don’t let us hold you back, Sorami. Have fun, now!” said Puk.

Sorami nodded and left immediately, leaving Snow White alone with Puk Puck once again.

“Alright, let me share my side of the story, Snow White,” said Puk Puck with a smile.

She took a seat again in her chair.

“Sachiko... Premium Sachiko. She ran away,” said Puk.

“I’ll need more details than that.”

“She’s important to a ritual that I’m doing, but she ran away. I don’t blame the girl, she’s probably very nervous. Still, she’s important to me. Not just for the ritual, but to me as well. Now the Osk faction is targeting her, since she’s out of my protection,” said Puk sadly.

“What ritual?” asked Snow White.

“Oh, hmm... Well... Normally I don’t tell people, but I can kind of give you a bit of information, I guess! Puk trusts you, Snow White! Okay, so



you know the story about the First Mage? Well, they've got... let's call it a device. The device has extremely powerful magic! But if we wanna use it, we gotta do the ritual, and Sachiko's central to that!"

"I see," said Snow White.

Fal still couldn't read Snow White, but her heartrate still hasn't stopped beating faster.

"If you help out, I can even help you out, Snow White! I can help find your missing friend!" said Puk.

Snow White raised her eyebrows.

"I really want Sachiko back and I'm worried for her. Magical Girl Hunter, you have the skills to track her down. Won't you please bring her back safely? Protect her from any harm done to her, okay?"

"Understood. I'll take the job," said Snow White.

What?

Just like that?

What!?

No hesitation. Snow White just accepted the job, just like that? That was weird. Snow White does trust people, but not so much that she'd just accept something from a complete stranger.

Puk Puck's eyes widened and she smiled brightly. She immediately went over and hugged Snow White.

"Oh thank you, thank you, thank you!!!"

At Puk Puck's hug, Snow White's heartrate peaked, sweat began dripping down her forehead, and she began showing blushes in her cheeks. However, she was still not showing any expression.

"You're just the best, Snow! I knew I could count on you! Don't worry, you won't be alone! I'll get you some help immediately!" said Puk Puck as she rushed away, finally leaving the room.

That's when Snow White took a deep breath, and her heartrate slowed down again to normal.

"What was that, Pon?" asked Fal, who appeared stereoscopically.

"What was what?"

"You just accepted, just like that?"

"It's okay, Fal. I read the voices of everyone in the manor, none of them have any negative thoughts about Puk Puck. Puk Puck also was only thinking about Sachiko's safety. She cares about her," said Snow White.

"You sure, Pon?"

"If anything goes wrong, you know I'm there, right?" said Snow White with a smile.

"Okay, Pon. I've got your back as always. If you trust her, I trust her, Pon."

Fal disappeared back into Snow White's phone. He still noticed that Snow White took some deep breaths and held her chest out, the blush didn't completely wash away from her cheeks yet.

She's calming down, but what *was* that, earlier?

## ☆ **Shadow Gale**

She didn't think she'd be attacked now.

Shadow Gale was prepared to be attacked. She was always prepared. Ever since she got the escort, she was prepared.

She didn't expect the attack to happen *now* , though.

The Magical Girl that attacked her. She attacked her at school, during classtime too. Shadow Gale should've expected that attacks can come at any time, but she still didn't expect them to attack her at school.

The attacker was a Magical Girl clad in steel.

An armor-based Magical Girl, she looked like a knight.

Due to her armor, Shadow Gale couldn't see her face. Her walk and gestures made Shadow Gale think of a slasher movie monster.

The students ran away, as the Armor Girl came with an army of black, gooey, shadowy creatures.

Shadow Gale ran off, in the chaos, she found a place where she could transform.

It didn't seem like the Armor Girl knew exactly where Shadow Gale was, just that she went to this school. If she started killing students to find Shadow Gale...

...That couldn't happen.

She transformed herself so that she could both survive the onslaught and save the other students.

Almost instantly, a group of about 10 Magical Girls rained down to fight the black creatures. These were Patricia's men.

The Armor Girl found Shadow Gale, but then, dropping in front of her, was a Magical Girl in police uniform, sirens blazing at her boots.

Patricia.

"Get behind me!" said Patricia, as she pulled out her gigantic handcuffs.

The Armor Girl tilted her head, then she shrugged, and came charging towards Patricia. Patricia, in turn, anticipated the charge.

The Armor Girl threw a punch, one that Patricia instantly dodged. She flipped above the Armor Girl, outmaneuvering her and now on her back.

Afterwards, she used the large chains that held her handcuffs together to strangle the Armor Girl from the back, using the leverage like guillotine.

The Armor Girl began to choke, her hands on the chain as Patricia pulled harder and harder.

The Armor Girl walked backwards, slamming Patricia into a wall, but Patricia held on, continuing to strangle her.



Patricia knee'd the armor girl in the ribs. Every hit made a large clanging noise on the armor. It seemed to pain Patricia as well, but it should weaken the Armor Girl.

She knee'd her, causing pain to the Armor Girl, as she tried to pull the chains strangling her neck.

However, it seems like the Armor Girl's strength increased, as she pulled the chain stronger than before.

"She's... Stronger than I thought... Run!"

The Armor Girl broke the chain from the two cuffs, and threw them to the ground. She quickly threw a punch backwards, but Patricia rolled forwards, grabbed the chain, stashed her cuffs in her belt, and ran towards Shadow Gale, grabbing her and piggybacking her.

Behind her, the Armor Girl's punch blew a hole in the wall of the school, as she looked towards Patricia, and gave chase to her.

Patricia ran across the city, jumping off telephone poles and rushing across the streets.

"Well, didn't expect this development, eh?" asked Patricia.

"A-Are we safe!?" asked Shadow Gale.

"We should be if we get out fast enough!" said Patricia.

They ran faster, Patricia's sirens blaring at her feet. However, just as they thought they may have escaped the Armor Girl.

She jumped in front of them.

When she landed on the concrete street, however, it cracked and shook. So much so that Patricia stumbled forwards, and both Magical Girls fell down from the earth shattering shake.

That Armor Girl's getting stronger somehow.

Patricia's momentum was met instantly with a kick, throwing her across a nearby park.

Shadow Gale's vision was blurry, but she saw the Armor Girl silently approaching her, walking towards her.

Then a chain wrapped itself around Armor Girl's neck. Handling the chain, from across the park, was Patricia, using it like a whip.

She pulled Armor Girl down to the ground, and dragged the Armor Girl towards her.

Then, she held each cuff of her handcuffs, now separated, with her hands, like a grip, and she began to punch the Armor Girl's face plate with it.

Patricia's handcuffs were Magical Handcuffs.

Though the chains holding them together may break, the cuffs themselves won't, and they, like any other Magical Item, are strong enough to withstand the strength of Magical Girls.

Meaning they're good for beating down other Magical Girls.

She punched Armor Girl over and over, beating her down as she continued to pummel her with her fists.

Patricia's punching was so intense, that a crater began forming around the Armor Girl's head. If she wasn't protected by her armor, her head would've been crushed by now.

The Armor Girl responded by choking Patricia, with a grip so strong that Patricia didn't expect it at all.

The Armor Girl stood up, carrying Patricia with a chokehold. With the Armor Girl's hand outstretched, Patricia thought fast.

She instantly opened her handcuffs, and slammed it shut on the Armor Girl's hands. Instantly, her grip felt lighter.

Patricia kicked her away, and launched a roundhouse that sent the Armor Girl flying towards a tree.

Patricia used her chain like a lasso, wrapping it around the Armor Girl's neck, then she pulled her back in, with the trajectory set, she kicked the Armor Girl in the head as soon as the Armor Girl flew towards her.

The Armor Girl was on the ground, still alive, but struggling to get up.  
Now's her chance to escape.



Patricia approached Shadow Gale, and they piggybacked once again,  
as Patricia continued to rush through the city.



“You okay?” asked Patricia

“I should be asking you that question” replied Shadow Gale.

“I’m fine, don’t worry. We need to worry more about the people chasing you. They’re relentless.”

What were these things?

Pfle may not have any memories but she certainly expected a lot of trouble to come towards Shadow Gale’s way.

“Do you know what those shadowy things are?”

“They’re demons,” said Patricia.

“What? Demons?”

“Not in the literal sense. That’s a nickname. It’s too complicated to explain, but all you need to know is I can handle them,” said Patricia.

She ran again.

She then got a nervous look on her face.

“Uh oh,” said Patricia.

“What?”

“My team’s not responding. Either the demons all got them or something worse did. It’s bad to stay out in the open, we’re taking a detour,” she said, making a sharp turn through the alleyways of the city.

Then Shadow Gale saw it.

Four flying shadowy things.

Demons.

One of them swooped down, and Patricia slid across, grabbed the flying demon’s ankles, and slammed it to a wall, destroying it in the process.

Next, Patricia jumped across a wall in the alleyway, then diagonally jumped again and again, climbing the alleys and reaching the rooftops.

She found one of the rooftop fences and forcefully removed the pole.

She needed a weapon. Her handcuffs were being used to restrain that Armor Magical Girl, so she needed to improvise.

With the poles, she swung at a demon swooping down, lopping its head off. She threw the pole at another demon, stabbing it and sending it crash landing.

The final demon rushed in to Patricia.

Patricia was ready, jumping and grabbing hold of the demon's head, and twisting its neck. The demon flailed around beforehand, knocking Shadow Gale off of Patricia.

As the demon died, Patricia breathed a sigh of relief.

"Whew... we're good. Demons are getting stronger," said Patricia.

"Wow... You're actually pretty good yourself," said Shadow Gale.

"Hahaha, well, I was hired for a reason, right?" said Patricia.

Then, she heard a loud thump. A Magical Girl had landed on the roof as well, standing only a few meters away from Patricia.

This Magical Girl had bright blue hair, a sort of swimsuit attire, with a tiara on her head.

What seemed like flying water particles were surrounding her, and an aura of cold air as well. She held a 3-pronged weapon.

A trident.

Her movement speed was fast, she instantly dashed towards Patricia, her trident pointed at her chest.

But Shadow Gale anticipated danger. Instinctively, she moved with a wrench, and caught the blue girl's trident before it reached Patricia.

The wrench was Shadow Gale's unique weapon, and she had released it without even thinking.

Now her and the blue girl were locked in combat. Shadow Gale redirected the trident away, and Shadow Gale used her free hand to pass scissors to Patricia.

Her scissors were also unique weapons. Shadow Gale had two. A large wrench, and some large scissors.

Shadow Gale used her wrench to prevent the princess from moving her trident, while Patricia used Shadow Gale's scissors to hit the blue girl.

She dodged fast, but Patricia was a veteran, and so she began to be able to predict where the blue girl started to dodge.

Patricia managed to scratch the girl with the scissors, causing bleeding to come from her face. Again, a scratch on the girl's shoulder. A scratch on the girl's torso.

The girl was disadvantaged, Shadow Gale kept holding the girl's trident back, while Patricia easily hit the girl with the scissors.

Although the girl moved and dodged, unless she lets go of the trident, she'll be at a disadvantage.

Then the girl's tiara began to glow.

"LUXURY MODE! ON!"

A large blue flash, and suddenly the girl had a blue aura shining around her.

Not only that, it seems like she's gotten stronger.

Patricia swung at her with Shadow Gale's scissors, but the blue girl caught the sharp end of the scissors with her palms. She still bled, but Patricia couldn't budge.

With the other arm holding the trident, locked with Shadow Gale's wrench, she swung it upwards with such strength.

Shadow Gale was sent flying. The princess aimed for a wall, and Shadow Gale was sent crashing towards it.

Her trident now free, she rammed it onto Patricia's left arm.

A scream of pain left Patricia's mouth, as the wound began to slowly froze. Her left arm slowly being covered in ice.

Patricia didn't care. She curled her right hand into a fist, and punched the blue girl as hard as she could.

The blue girl's face was damaged, hurt, bleeding from that one punch, but the trident was still in Patricia's left arm, and her frozen arm is getting wider.

She punched the blue girl again. The blue girl was emotionless, but spat blood.

Patricia punched her again, and the third punch sent the girl flying to the ground, the spear being tossed towards the rooftop.

The blue girl's nose was broken, and she was bleeding from her face, she fell down to the ground.

Patricia didn't stop. The girl reached for her trident, but Patricia stomped on her ribs. The noise of cracking could be heard even to Shadow Gale.

"GYAH!"

Only now did the girl react in pain. Patricia's arm was still frozen up to the elbow, but Patricia went on top of the girl, and continued pummeling her face.

Each punch was delivered with the intensity to knock this girl out.

The girl was coughing blood, breathing hard, and was wounded badly. Despite how much raw strength she's possessing, Patricia won't let her get a chance to use it.

Instead of the trident, the girl grabbed hold of Patricia's frozen arm, and began to increase the freezing.

Now it has reached Patricia's shoulders. Patricia focused her punches, punching the girl in the face multiple times that the girl could barely open her eyes.

With the last of the girl's remaining strength, she lurched out to grab the trident, and then she aimed a shot at Shadow Gale.

Patricia noticed, ice now almost reaching her face. With her free arm, she altered the direction of the trident, and the girl ended up firing three ice shards upwards.

Now no longer pummeled, the girl headbutted Patricia, trying to get out of her grip and stun her.

Despite having ice covering half her face, Patricia wasn't easily shaken off.

With her free hand, the princess began to choke Patricia. Although slightly out of breath, Patricia choked the girl in return.

The pressure of Patricia's choke made the girl gag blood.

In response, the girl tried to stab Patricia in the neck with her trident, but throughout the odds, Patricia dodged, and it only hit her shoulder.

Suddenly, the girl didn't seem to be fighting back, but used leverage on the stab on Patricia's shoulder to...

"A-Gk... Ngh..."

...An icicle shard stabbed Patricia in the back of the neck, right in the medulla oblongata.

That trident shard, that trident ice shard that was aimed for Shadow Gale, the one that Patricia blocked.

She wasn't aiming for Shadow Gale, she wanted Patricia to struggle with her, so she can aim the trident upwards.

Then, what goes up, must come down. She just had to move Patricia into position.

Patricia began to cough blood at the girl's face, her freezing reaching almost her entire body, before she collapsed on top of the girl.

The girl brushed off her body, she stood up, face bloody, ribs broken, scratches all over her. Her crystal in her tiara was still glowing, but she was hardly able to stand.

Shadow Gale realized that tears began streaming down her face.



She was scared, and Patricia had just died. She stood up, angry, wanting to get revenge. However, she herself had been heavily damaged in the fight.

The princess, though wounded, was able to go straight to Shadow Gale and uppercut her in the stomach.

Shadow Gale felt pain, then blood started coming out. Her breath was gone, the punch in the stomach completely stunned her.

The girl then placed a chokehold on Shadow Gale, her eyes cold and unmoving, despite all the damage she received.

She ran towards the wall that she threw Shadow Gale towards, and slammed Shadow Gale's head towards it.

Blurry Visions.

Shadow Gale slid down, she was in a sitting position, too tired to get back up, too hurt and wounded.

She knee'd Shadow Gale's forehead again.

Ears ringing.

Warm liquid trickled down her nose. This was blood. Was she going to die here?

The blue girl took a small break, tired for her breath. Then, she kneeled down, looked at Shadow Gale, grabbed her by the neck, and hurled a fist at Shadow Gale's face.

Stay awake.

Another hit. Shadow Gale's breathing became harder.

Stay awake...

Each hit harder than before. Over and over, until finally, Shadow Gale began to drift off. No matter how much she held on, she couldn't handle the painful concussions.

Shadow Gale let go, and fell unconscious.

## ☆ Uluru

Uluru stepped out the gates of Puk Puck's manor. She looked both ways, and once she was sure it's clear, she nodded.

She motioned for the other two Magical Girls to come forward.

Ever since this morning, Uluru had been watching the perimeter of Puk Puck's manor, ensuring that no raids from the Osk faction could occur.

Puk Puck had saved Uluru ten years ago.

Uluru had almost nothing, but then, Puk Puck came and saw her. The young Magical Girl with nowhere to go, nowhere to live.

Puk Puck took her in.

Puk Puck, one of the Three Sages, the highest heroes of the Land of Magic, took in Uluru. Granted, Puk Puck was the more public Sage. Most of the others hide their identities of their incarnations quite well.

But still...

...Someone like that, looking at someone like Uluru, offering her a hand, giving her a chance at life.

Uluru was indebted to Puk Puck.

Normally, she'd just be indebted, but the more she stayed at Puk's manor, the more she saw how much Puk Puck cared about her servants.

No, that's wrong.

They're not servants, they're family. All of them were treated like close friends to Puk Puck.

Uluru wasn't flawless, and she's made mistakes. She's made big mistakes often, mistakes that would cost Puk Puck resources, time, you name it.

But through it all, Puk Puck always acted like a caring mother, forgiving Uluru of any mistakes.

"Don't worry, Uluru! You'll do better next time! Let bygones be bygones, I say!" is what Puk Puck always says to her.

How could anyone be this tolerant and forgiving?

Since then, Uluru strove to make Puk Puck proud.

To be indebted to her, she owed Puk Puck everything.

Puk Puck was caring.

Puk Puck was sweet.

Puk Puck was beautiful.

She was perfect, and Uluru didn't deserve her love and care. So, when Sachiko ran away, of course Uluru was furious.

Disappointed, really. Sachiko had been given the same treatment as Uluru and all of Puk's family.

And she repaid her request to join a ritual by running away. What kind of person does that? The ritual won't kill her, Puk Puck doesn't kill her family.

If they had worked for the other Sages, they knew that Sachiko's escape would be punished by death.

But what does Puk Puck do? She sends out a search party to get her back. She's worried for Sachiko, and when Uluru asked, Puk Puck confirmed it.

She's willing to forgive Sachiko, even if Sachiko ran away.

Puk Puck has a caring and forgiving heart, and it's this kindness that made Uluru do her best. She wanted to make Puk Puck proud of her.

Uluru was sent to lead the search party. The search members were Sorami, who she was already quite familiar with, and...

...Snow White.

The Magical Girl Hunter, they call her. Known for chasing her prey to the ends of the earth, the perfect tracker.

Uluru had a problem with her.

Several, actually.

For one thing, Snow White is so callous around Puk Puck it frustrated her. At least show a bit of respect.

Puk Puck invited Snow White over for some tea and a meal before they left, and Snow White, instead of politely accepting the food of the host, just grabbed a cola out of her bag and some chips.

“I like to eat on the go.” That’s what Snow White told Puk Puck.

“Ah! Chips and soda! Wow, very western, as long as your belly’s filled, it doesn’t really matter, right?” is what Puk said.

Even through Snow White’s callousness, Puk Puck was still on her best behavior. It should be the other way around...

...But Puk Puck asked Snow White to be on the team, and Uluru trusted Puk’s judgement.

Doesn’t mean she’s not a bit irritated, though.

“TEEEEN HUT! At ease!”

She looked behind her. Snow White and Sorami were standing side by side. Sorami smiling away, Snow White looking as rude as ever, those dead eyes...

“Alright, team! If we’re going to get in, we’re going to need callsigns. We don’t want our names to even be known. So, seeing as I’m leader, I’ll be Zero! Callsigns!” said Uluru.

“I’ll beeeee.... One!” said Sorami happily.

“...Two,” said Snow White.

“Three, Pon!” said a Cyber Fairy.

*Wait, what!?*

Uluru forgot about the Cyber Fairy.

Uluru had nothing against Cyber Fairies, it’s just that Cyber Fairies have been known to cause some trouble lately, but again, Puk Puck trusted Snow White, so she trusted her Cyber Fairy too.

They're not all bad, but Uluru just wasn't expecting a Cyber Fairy to show up.

"Well, now that we have our callsigns up, everyone's good to go! We all know what we're gonna deal with, right? This is a secret mission! Lady Puck's entrusting us on this!" said Uluru.

"Oh, sis, you and your big speeches again!" said Sorami. She whispered to Snow White, "She does this all the time, don't worry," whispered Sorami.

"ANYWAY... Any questions before we go?" asked Uluru.

Snow White raised her hand.

Of course it has to be her.

"Yeees?"

"Not a question, but I should let you know, since we'll be working together. My Magical Skill is to hear the voices of people in distress," said Snow White.

Uluru blinked.

"Wait, what does that mean?" asked Uluru.

"Oh, Snow told me this while you were looking around outside the gate being all silly! She can read minds!" said Sorami with a smile.

*What!?*

"EXCUSE ME!?" shouted Uluru.

"Well, mind reading's a general way to put it. I can hear people's worries and fears, I can't really mind read on the go," said Snow White.

"So... you can read our minds right now?" asked Uluru, her face getting a bit red.

"Yes," said Snow White.

*Okay, that does it.*

"I read your mind back in the manor too," said Snow White.



*...As long as she doesn't say it.*

“Also...”

*Don't say it.*

“...I also read...”

*Don't SAY IT*

“...Puk Puck's mind as well,” said Snow White.

*She said it.*

“OUT! OUT! I WANT HER OUT OF THE TEAM!” said Uluru.

Uluru's face became fully red. She began mumbling incoherent sentences and words, rushing at Snow White, wanting to punch her.

Snow White sidestepped her, Uluru ran so fast she tripped and fell.

*That little...*

She stood up, and she pulled her sleeves back, but Sorami stood in front of Uluru and Snow White.

“Sisss, you're making a big fuss!” said Sorami, patting Uluru's head.

“Get out of my way! She's being rude! She can't just... pry into people's heads like that! Especially not Puk Puck's head!” said Uluru, trying to reach out for Snow White, but Sorami restrained her.

“You didn't let her finish, Uluru. Calm down, it's a secret mission right? Making a lot of noise will get people's attention,” said Sorami.

Uluru took a deep breath.

“Puk Puck chose Snow White because she can read people's minds, so we can find imposters and liars. You can do that, right, Snow?” asked Sorami.

Snow White nodded.

“See? And that means if you've decided to work with Puk Puck, that means you trust her right?”

Again, Snow White nodded.

She trusted Puk Puck?

“Wait, so... you have nothing bad against Lady Puck?” asked Uluru.

“On the contrary, I trust her. When I read her thoughts, it was pure worry about Sachiko. She really wanted her to be safe. Also, everyone at the manor had no bad thoughts about her,” said Snow White.

“Well, obviously. Puk takes care of us all,” said Uluru.

“It shows. I also read your mind, Uluru. You’re worried about Sachiko too, more than anything,” said Snow White.

“Well... yeah, Puk Puck sent me after her. She’s important to her,” said Uluru.

“You’re worried about Sachiko for more sentimental reasons. You’re close with her, aren’t you?” asked Snow White.

“Uluru, Sachiko, and I are adopted sisters! Raised together for a couple years, yep!” said Sorami.

“SORAMI!” shouted Uluru.

Snow White smiled, “That explains it. Listen, I trust you, Uluru. I also trust Puk Puck, so there’s no need to worry. I’m not here to sabotage, I’m here to help, okay? We’ll get Sachiko back,” said Snow White.

“Besides, Snow’s power is automatic, right?” asked Sorami.

“Yeah. I don’t control it. I can direct it, but it’s always on,” said Snow White.

“See? It’s not her fault, sis!” said Sorami.

Uluru took a deep breath, pouted her face, and put on her coat.

The three of them left the manor in outfits that disguised themselves.



Snow White wore a black coat to disguise her flowers, Sorami couldn't really wear much, but she got rid of her decorations on her hair, and Uluru did her best to hide her pop gun and her large tail.

It's a secret mission, so it pays to be discreet.

## ☆ Sorami Nakano

When Sorami thought of Premium Sachiko, the only thing that came to mind is one word.

Fear.

Sachiko was... for better or worse, a scaredy cat.

And that's okay, she's Sorami's older sister, and Sorami's fine with that. Sachiko wanted a happy life, but with her timidness and cowardice, it's quite hard for her get that.

When Sorami asked Sachiko to watch movies with her, Sachiko agreed, and Sorami played a couple of DVDs of famous movie flicks.

Then Sorami turned on a horror movie, and in the first five minutes, when they saw the corpse in the closet, Sachiko immediately screamed and ran upstairs, locking her door.

She wouldn't open it till the next day.

She also wouldn't volunteer for things either, she was rather shy. However, when Sachiko was picked, she would always try her best to succeed.

So, this was strange.

She was picked for the ritual. She was finally the starring role. Sorami remembered, just weeks before Sachiko's disappearance, there were several post-it notes stuck around Puk Puck's manor.

*Everyone do their best for the ritual!*

*Let's congratulate Premium Sachiko for being the focus point of the ritual!*

*I know you can all do it!*

For once, Sachiko was getting the attention and love that she wanted, and she seemed happy about it too.

So why, then, did she run away?

Pressure? Fear? The ritual itself was fine, so Sorami didn't really understand the problem.

Sure, Sachiko may be easy to frighten, but she's never one to outright abandon people. To top it off, her disappearance was strange too.

When someone leaves Puck's manor without permission, an alarm will ring, signalling that they're leaving of their own free will.

It helps keep track of who comes in and out.

However, when Sachiko escaped, no alarm rang. So what was going on, there?

Puk Puck had sent their eldest sister, Uluru, to lead the search party for Sachiko. Uluru was loyal to Puk Puck, and was definitely willing to give it her all.

However, she can be rather hard to get along with.

Not to mention she hides a lot of what she's really like from others.

There was the time when Uluru was patrolling the gardens of Puck's manor, watching for any possible raids from Osk's faction.

She heard a cat meowing. Instinctively, she pulled out her pop gun. It was a rifle, aimed at the cat instinctively, and fired it.

Of course, all that came out was a flag that said "Bang!" and a loud pop. Yes, contrary to what she keeps insisting, Uluru's rifle doesn't fire bullets. It's actually a melee weapon, as ridiculous as that sounds.

The cat shrieked at the loud pop, and hearing the cat shrieked surprised Uluru, who shrieked back.

The cat shrieked further, and Uluru fell backwards, shrieking at this rabid cat.

Needless to say, Uluru doesn't like talking about those things. She tries to be a good loyal member of Puck's guard.

Puk Puck cares for Uluru that much, and is willing to forgive Uluru for almost anything she's done. That's Puk Puck for you, she's ready to



forgive and forget, move on, and improve.

This is probably why Puk Puck had Snow White join the team.

Not only was she a good tracker, she was also a competent fighter, from what Sorami has heard.

Uluru may be the head, but Snow White's the one that'll be relied upon when the team gets into trouble.

Uluru walked way further ahead, so Sorami managed to talk to Snow White in the back for a bit.

"Hey there, Snow!" said Sorami.

"Hello."

"Listen... Uluru's kinda... rough, but I'm sure she'll warm up to you!" said Sorami.

"Uluru cares about Sachiko. It doesn't matter if she warms up to me or not, as long as we get her back safe," said Snow White.

"Ah, I see," replied Sorami.

In her heart, she apologized for Uluru's behavior. Because Snow White can read her distressed thoughts, she could hear her apology as well.

Snow White looked back at Sorami and offered a smile to her.

"Look, I don't hate Uluru. I know you want us to get along, and that's great. But it's okay if she dislikes me. As long as we work together. Forcing it won't help anyone," said Snow White.

Sorami nodded, "We won't force it, but I think we can *show* that you're likeable. Uluru's a good girl, too!"

"What are you suggesting?" asked Snow White.

"You find people who are in trouble, and we'll help 'em out!" said Sorami.

In the human world, Sorami pointed at a college boy in a bicycle, frustrated at his smartphone.

“Sis, look!” said Sorami.

“What?” asked Uluru.

“Snow White says he’s in trouble. He forgot his phone password.”

“...And?”

“We’re Magical Girls, we help people! My Magic can easily find out that phone’s password!” said Sorami.

“Well... yeah, we do, but we’re on a mission right now, aren’t we?” asked Uluru.

“You can spare some time to help, can’t you? It’s what Puk Puck would’ve wanted!” said Sorami.

“...Well, that’s true.”

“Alright, I’ll head over there right now!”

Sorami helped the person figure out their phone passcode, and Snow White and Uluru stood beside each other, watching Sorami.

Further ahead, a garbage man accidentally dropped a can he was working on.

Both Snow White and Uluru immediately rushed in to help. Uluru, however, was slightly surprised that Snow White also rushed in. Snow White only smiled lightly, as the two of them helped the man.

Sorami wanted to find Sachiko, yes, but it was also important to her that everyone get along.

That’s what she’s learned from Puk Puck all these years, to always see the positive side of people, and get along with them.

That’s her philosophy as well, and one she’s followed her whole life.

☆ **Uluru**

Both Sorami and Snow White had suggested that they take the train.

Uluru knows that Magical Girls can run faster than trains, but if someone happened to spot three girls running 100 kilometers per hour, that would be pretty strange.

Not to mention any other Magical Girls could see them as well.

Snow White bought the tickets, and they boarded the station. Their destination was W-City. It's the place where Sachiko was apparently rumored to escape to.

W-City is a quiet suburban town. When most of the cities in Japan merged together to condense, W-City was resistant.

The mayor wasn't having it, and the citizens disliked the merge, thinking that progress was going to eat their culture alive.

So, W-City was a little behind on the times. The debt rate was pretty high, and there isn't really much to do there.

On the bright side, because it has a small population, it *should* theoretically be easier to find people there, especially a Magical Girl like Sachiko.

At the train, Snow White and Sorami were talking and chatting loudly, then Snow White's Cyber Fairy joined in too.

Uluru, however, was just kind of sitting there, staring outside the window.

Buildings passed over, trees went from left to right. Uluru looked at them as they passed by, letting her mind wander.

*Why did you run away, Sachiko?*

The ritual wasn't dangerous at all. Puk Puck assured her. There was no sacrifice involved. There was no pain involved. There was nothing to be scared of.

So why did she run?

Even moreso, who leaked the information? How did the Osk faction know about her running away?

It's one thing to run away, it's another for someone to leak info. She hasn't made that much noise in the human world yet. Otherwise, Puk Puck would notice.

Oh Sachiko, you're very lucky that you're under Puk Puck's protection. Other Sages might kill you if you pull the same thing.

Despite anything that people say, Uluru is the eldest.

She had to look out for her sisters. That included Sachiko.

Premium Sachiko didn't exactly have the most useful power, either. Although, it sounds very useful when you hear it.

*To make someone extremely lucky .*

Except that it only works on a one-time thing, and then the rest of the time you're going to have super bad luck.

Uluru didn't really want to remember the amount of humans that Sachiko thought she helped with those powers, and then died.

Sure, you'll be successful at one thing, but then...

A man's head was hit with a meteorite.

Another was hit by a runaway train. How? The train tracks somehow messed up, and that led a chain reaction that caused the train to derail to a library, crashing into it and killing him.

It's the universe giving you the biggest middle finger. It's like it's telling you, "I don't give a shit about your life anymore."

So Sachiko's never really used it to help anyone else again.

She can't even force it onto someone if she wanted to. To actually use her magic, you need to write on her clothes. There's a contract there, that you write in complete detail the one thing you want luck on.

Afterwards, you sign your name, and give your consent. Then, and only then will Sachiko's powers come into play.

Enjoy your one-time success before you experience a string of failures.

“Hey, Snow,” said Sorami.

“Hm?”

“If we run into trouble, what should we do. Honestly, you’re the only one with proper combat experience,” said Sorami.

“Fal and I will handle it,” said Snow.

“If we’re careful, we shouldn’t run into any trouble at all,” chimed in Uluru, who heard that part of the conversation.

She had to find Sachiko. She had to bring her back.

Sachiko is her sister.

She still remembered the first time she met her. Puk Puck introduced them one by one. All separated, brought up as a family.

“You’re the eldest, so you gotta take good care of ‘em okay, Uluru?” said Puk Puck.

And Uluru really did. She always tried to make sure her younger sisters don’t hurt themselves or get themselves in trouble.

Sachiko would be the one who always got into trouble, mostly due to her overreaction when she gets nervous.

She broke a bonzai plant and tried to run away, before some of the servants got mad at her and dragged her back.

Puk Puck just gave her a hug and let her go.

“Don’t worry too much! It’s only a plant,” said Puk Puck.

Puk Puck was someone that Uluru looked up to, and she’ll become like her, a role model to her sisters, if need be.

She’s their eldest. She’ll protect them both.

☆ **Sorami Nakano**

“I’m tired...” said Sorami yawning.



“Already? It’s only been five minutes,” said Uluru.

“Well, five minutes or not, I’m still tired. Let’s take a small break, hm?”

“Fine, I’ll book a hotel,” said Uluru disgruntled.

As Sorami took a short nap in the train, she checked Snow White and Fal’s abilities on her own.

It’s tough to actually understand Fal’s abilities and Snow White’s without some hard explaining, but luckily, Sorami’s magic can handle that.

Her ability is *To see the contents of sealed things* .

Something people can’t observe normally, Sorami will be able to see it. This applies to both physical things, or abstract things like information.

Hence, she was able to see the data and details of Fal and Snow White’s abilities just by using her ability on Snow White’s phone.

Sorami knew all there is to know about Snow White and Fal’s powers now.

Sorami was always the calm collected one. She’s also the happier of the three sisters. The eldest is a bit impatient, the middle child is a bit timid, and the younger child is the one to sort them out.

She remembered when Puk Puck gave her those words,

“Get along with your sisters and make sure they get along with each other, too, okay?” is what Puk Puck told her.

Sorami felt proud to be entrusted by Puk Puck.

Uluru was also proud. She must’ve been told the same thing about protecting her sisters, being the eldest.

Even Sachiko was congratulated, and was happy to be praised by Puk Puck.

Uluru had been with Puk the longest. Whenever she did something good, Puk would pat her head and give her a hug and say “good job!” which made Uluru happy.

Uluru wants to be a good role model, and Sorami respects that.

Even now, Sorami remembered in the meal before Snow White joined the search party, Puk Puck was talking about all of Snow White's achievements since she first became a Magical Girl.

Finally, she entrusted Snow White to protect the team and lend her Magical Girl wisdom.

"Get along with the sisters, okay, Snow? I know you'll do great! They're very good, too! Thanks so much for wanting to help out!" said Puk Puck.

Snow White simply nodded in that dinner, but Sorami saw Snow White's cheeks blush red when Puk Puck said those words.

There's just something about the way she says them, and her overall atmosphere that makes you really enjoy and respect Puk Puck.

Either way, now it was time to rest.

They stopped at a hotel, and made a roundabout look throughout the city.

Fal was able to detect Magical Girls from over 200 meters away, and Snow White was able to hear the voices of their hearts.

If Sachiko wanted to escape, one of those two will find her.

Sorami herself checked inside the contents of buildings, making sure Sachiko was there or not.

They looked through markets, stalls, and other commercial building hubs.

Finally, they reached a small park.

Sorami yawned, "I'm tiiiired, let's rest up, gang!"

"Again!? We've only just started, Sorami!" said Uluru.

"Still tiring. C'mon, Snow. There's a nice bench nearby," said Sorami grabbing Snow White's hand.

Snow White just shrugged and followed along.

Uluru palmed her face, “Okay, Sorami. You hungry? You want food? Fine, I’ll buy you some food, that should get your spirits up,” she said as she went to the food market.

Magical Girls don’t need to eat.

Magical Girls don’t need to sleep.

They don’t get tired from physical activities. Indeed, Sorami didn’t *really* need to rest. However, Sorami wants to get along with her team.

Food and break times are the best ways to bond with people, so she’s trying to maximize that as much as possible.

The trio ate while Sorami began talking to Snow White.

She asked her a variety of questions, like her adventures, her likes, dislikes. Sorami really just wanted to get to know Snow White.

However, just then, Fal began to beep.

“Three Magical Girls detected, Pon! East side!”

“Three?” asked Snow White.

Three identical looking girl figures seemed to be running with coats towards them.

The coats obscured who they were, but Sorami used her powers, and underneath their coats, she saw what seems to be a robe, or a tabard...

...With playing cards on them.

Jack of Spades.

Queen of Spades.

King of Spades.

“Why do they have different card suits?” asked Sorami out loud.

Snow White instantly jumped out of the chair and ripped off her jacket, revealing her Magical Girl attire.

The other Magical Girls also did the same. Uluru, sensing the danger, grabbed her pop gun.

☆ **Fal**

Shufflin!?

Shufflin? But how? Fal had thought she and Grim Heart died in an accident. Of course, Fal never believed that, but he didn't expect to see them again so soon.

Three Shufflins, all spades, Face cards, not the Ace.

This will be hard for Snow White.

Uluru ran near Snow White.

The three Shufflin released their spade-like spears. Snow White equipped *Ruler* .

However, Fal then heard a voice from behind him.

“EVERYBODY GET ON THE GROUND AND CLOSE YOUR EYES NOW, OR YOU WILL **DIE** !”

Fear gripped Fal's heart.

His creator, Keek, never programmed him with a way to close his eyes. He can't do so, which means he will die.

He's never thought of dying...

...He didn't know if Cyber Fairies experienced death like everyone else. If they do... was there an afterlife?

What about Snow White?

Will Snow White be safe without him?

...Will she be able to cope with everything without him?

Fal was angry and afraid. Angry that everything came down to this, and that Fal will die, leaving Snow White alone.

He was afraid of death, too. He's at peace with it, but afraid of what it might do to Snow White and her psyche.

The three Shufflins instantly dropped to the ground, Sorami as well, and Snow White dived down too, closing her eyes and breathing a bit heavily.

Fal was prepared, but afraid...

...

...

...Nothing happened.

Oh, nothing happened?

Then he remembered that what Uluru just said made no sense whatsoever.

"Sorami, where's the magic rope?" asked Uluru.

"In my bag," said Sorami curled up in a fetal position, closing her eyes.

Uluru grabbed the rope. She approached Snow White.

"I'm gonna tie up these girls, anywhere we can store them?" asked Uluru.

"My bag... 4D bag... grab it from my waist," said Snow White, also in a fetal position, closing her eyes, sweating. Her heartrate's up again, possibly out of fear of death.

Uluru calmly tied up the Shufflin, who were also scared and closing their eyes on the ground.

In the middle of that, Snow White opened her eyes and breathed deeply.

Her eyes were wide, in shock, she looked around for a while, and slowly, she stood up, helping Uluru tie up the Shufflin and releasing it back into the bag.

☆ **Snow White**

Uluru sighed, "Thank god that worked..."

Sorami was still on the ground shaking.

"It's okay, Sorami. I lied," said Uluru.

Sorami breathed a sigh of relief and stood up. She looked at Uluru and hugged her, "Aw, you did it, sis! See, I knew that tactic would work!"

"Hey... what's with the sudden hug?" asked Uluru.

"Cause you did it!" said Sorami.

Uluru nodded, her cheeks were red, but Snow White also saw her hands. The one holding her rifle was shaking.

So many thoughts passed by Uluru's mind.

*Please don't kill Sorami*

*Don't find out it's a lie*

*I hope they don't call my bluff on my gun*

*Please let this work*

Snow White knows Uluru's power, but is still affected by it. Her Magical Skill synchs well with Snow White's, under the right conditions.

Uluru's power is *To tell believable lies* .

Anything Uluru says, people will believe. That's why Snow White instantly felt death on her grip when she shouted it, and dived down.

Snow White didn't realize that she was still afraid of dying.

She mostly hides her emotions from people, for the best. She was at peace with dying, but perhaps she just didn't want to die.

Being at peace with death and accepting death are two different things.

Snow White won't back down due to a death threat, but at the same time, she won't just let someone kill her. She's not seeking death.

If she dies, so many people will not be able to get saved. Many more may succumb to the evils that she's experienced in her life.

But now, she's fine, and it's thanks to her powers interacting with Uluru.

Uluru's magic cancels when it's clear that it's a lie. When Uluru was tying up the Shufflin, her entire thoughts were her fear of being exposed, and the Shufflin calling her bluff.

Because of this, Snow White knew it was a lie, and was able to counteract Uluru's magic.

However, there was a period where Snow White completely believed her, meaning that Uluru needed to worry about the lie being found out.

It's not perfect, but there's a way for Snow White to bypass her magic.

But Snow White was also proud at Uluru, for finding a way to incapacitate Face card Shufflins without violence.

Snow White placed her hands on Uluru's shoulders.

"Hey, good job. You saved us all, Uluru," said Snow White with a smile.

Uluru was still trembling in fear, her hands still shaking.

Her thoughts are of Sorami. She wanted to protect her sister, and was afraid that Sorami might die from the Shufflin.

Uluru cares, she's just a bit stubborn, and Snow White's met people like those before.

However, now they have to deal with the Shufflin. The Shufflin that they caught, Face Cards. Snow White didn't expect to see them again.

"Are they back, Pon?" asked Fal.

"They're different," said Snow White.

"Pon?"

"They don't seem like a hivemind anymore. These are different Shufflin. I don't know if it means anything, but no hivemind might mean no Joker," said Snow White.

"So what does that mean, Pon?" asked Fal.

"As long as they're in the bag we're fine."



Fal nodded.

If Shufflin is involved, is Grim Heart involved too? Why send Shufflin after Sachiko? Just how important is she that they sent Spade Face Cards to find her?

Snow White zipped up her bag, the 3 Shufflins inside, and prepared to leave the park.

“Wait, sis!” said Sorami.

“What?” asked Uluru.

“Look around you,” said Sorami.

The bread shop, a couple in the bench, an old man feeding the pigeons. They were all on the ground, some crying, some afraid.

They must’ve all heard Uluru.

At least the pigeons kept eating. They didn’t understand her at all.

“Oh... oops. Uh... IT’S OKAY, I LIED! YOU WON’T DIE!” shouted Uluru.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and got up. Sorami laughed, Uluru pouted, and Snow White herself breathed a sigh of relief that a battle was won without bloodshed.

## ☆ **CQ Angel Hammer**

The sun is circled by planets.

Planets can be circled by satellites, sometimes artificially.

Artificial satellites are operated by people.

For every great looking thing, a star, a planet, a satellite, there exists smaller things that make them seem great in comparison.

Helpers and minions are crucial to anyone who’s a big deal.

The Osk Faction, however, is unique, in that compared to the other two Sages, their population of Magical Girls is quite miniscule.

They often don't have actual help, nor do they outsource and hire. The Osk faction are secretive. Instead, they are the leading researchers on Man-Made Magical Girls.

An attempt to utilize similar magic that the First Mage did.

Of course, there *are* actual Magical Girls that worked there, like CQ. She was a real Magical Girl. It's just that not many would like Osk's ideology, nor their goals.

The latest Shufflin, called appropriately enough, Shufflin II, was an upgrade as well as a downgrade.

Shufflin II did not have a Joker commanding the Shufflins.

The idea of Shufflin is a Magical Girl able to replenish herself. An unstoppable regenerating army.

However, once the enemy knows that Shufflin can replenish herself, they'll immediately go for the Joker, they know their weakness.

They'll even send people who will fight to the death, so that the Joker can't kill them to replenish her deck.

Those are the most dangerous opponents. The ones who are at peace with death.

So now, Shufflin II was created.

Grim Heart didn't want to listen to Hammer's suggestion and left off with Shufflin. Look how *that* operation ended up.

Shufflin II had the upgrade of having no Joker, so each soldier had independent thought... to an extent.

Shufflin II's army was also highly enhanced. Their capabilities are better than their equals in the previous Shufflin.

The sacrifice is having no Joker as a central command. It's okay, because Hammer will fulfill that role.

CQ Angel Hammer's magic is *To be able to speak to someone's mind* .

Possessing a magical radio, CQ Angel Hammer is able to talk to anyone she's encountered before, straight into their mind.

She looked at her status devices. Three Spade Face cards were captured. Big blow.

Completely by accident. Losing 3 *Spades* is very bad. Face cards especially. At least it wasn't the Ace.

However, it seems that the Magical Girls that beat them decided to take them hostage instead of killing them.

Perfect...

"Ignore them for now," said CQ, broadcasting to every other Shufflin II.

CQ's magic ignores distance, so long as it's someone she's met before. You could be at the center of the earth and she could still talk to you.

Her voice would also be translated too. Automatically, to the target's language.

Not only was this useful for commanding, like Shufflin II, but also for negotiating and strategizing, as she can safely communicate with an opponent without actually having to be near them.

She just has to meet them first.

"Heart Shufflins, meet me at the park. There's something I want to investigate," said CQ.

Heart Shufflins are good for guarding yourself. They're highly durable. The Diamond Shufflins are back at HQ, monitoring CQ and making sure everything is going smoothly.

CQ took some popcorn, ate a bit, drank a bit, then left for the park.

What she noticed were three Magical Girls in the far distance. *So this is who the Spades lost to*.

"Diamond, send me info on how they were beaten easily," said CQ in the air.

On her Magical Phone was a text containing a video of the scene. It seems like the girl with the gun said something, that made the Shufflins just dive and cower.

Further research reveals the Magical Girl's name to be Uluru. Her power is to *Tell believable lies*.

Ah... That explains it.

However, the video shows more. It seems everyone is following her words, but the pigeons in the park don't.

So her words aren't truth, they just make people believe.

Furthermore, her magic shouldn't work on anyone that can't understand her.

Yes, this was the key to warfare. Information. The spades may be captured, and CQ may have lost some of her key soldiers, but in return, she found out how one Magical Girl's abilities worked, and that... is worth any price.

CQ looked at the park, and saw two boys playing soccer.

One boy kicked the ball so far it landed on the street.

As they chased after them, CQ smiled and said,

"Uh-uh boys, can't take the ball suddenly. It's dangerous to do that," said CQ.

The two boys looked around confused. Their confusion soon turned to fear. This is because CQ's voice is heard from your head, with no clear source.

"Better run off now, or I'll tell your principals, hehehe," said CQ with a chuckle.

The boys ran away to their bikes. To them, it must feel like a ghost suddenly talked to them. Ah... the joys of having fun with her powers.

Anyways, duty calls, and the Heart Shufflin were ready, and so CQ descended.

# Interlude

## ☆ Shadow Gale

*Where am I?*

Shadow Gale's body was tired. She had been relieved of her scissors and wrench, and she was inside a room that she didn't even know.

It was dark.

Was it daytime or nighttime?

What happened?

Patricia.

Patricia's dead. Now Shadow Gale remembered. Patricia protected Shadow Gale, and it cost her her life...

But Shadow Gale wasn't killed.

Patricia was, but Shadow Gale wasn't, which means...

Which means...

They wanted her alive.

They wanted to capture her. What for? Hostage?

Were they trying to get to Pfle?

Is Pfle okay? What about the other Magical Girls? Were they dead too?

*Oh god... How many did I kill by being protected*

Shadow Gale realized she wasn't in any kind of restraints. However, watching her in the distance was something far worse.

Black sheets of wings. Four of them, each in one corner of the room.

Whenever Shadow Gale moved a limb, one of the wings moved, tracking her movements down.

These must be the demons.

Shadow Gale was captured. Was there no way out?

Shadow Gale began knocking on the wall. Maybe there was a secret passage? Maybe there was... something! Anything!

Reality didn't work like that. There were no progress cues.

What would Pfler do in her situation?

Pfler always had a backup plan.

That was one of her good traits. She was smart and resourceful. Shadow Gale wished that Pfler was more of that...

...And not the other things.

Only Shadow Gale could stop Pfler. Only Shadow Gale could really stop Pfler, while also making sure she comes out of it a better person.

She can't die here... Not now... It's not too late.

But does Snow White also know about this? Where is Snow White? Did Shadow Gale's entrusted memory help her?

Was everything for nothing?

Shadow Gale felt like giving up.

All her life she's allowed someone else to take the reigns. Is it this easy to give up? She didn't want to give up...

...But what can she do?

She got angry. She was mad at her situation.

She pounded the floor in frustration, creating a crater on it, as she began streaming out tears. She was unable to do anything about her situation.

Now she's at the mercy of her kidnappers.

As soon as she smashed the floor, two wings rushed in, grabbed Shadow Gale's arms, and smashed them to the wall behind her, causing more pain again.

Shadow Gale cried.

She cried because not once did she seem to do anything that worked for herself. She wasn't good enough to save anyone, she wasn't good enough to get herself out of here.

She can't be used as leverage, she won't let it.

She can't...

...There's so many people that will die if this happens.

The wings released her arms, they fell to her side. Shadow Gale didn't stand up. What was the point. The wings prevented escape, and all she can do is wait and see what's in store for her.

The door opened.

In front of her, standing in the doorway, was an armored Magical Girl.



# Chapter 2: Seizing Good Luck

☆ **Pfle**

“I have to hand it to you. It’s not every day the kidnapper comes to you in person to negotiate.”

The Wheelchair Magical Girl, *Pfle* , sat on her chair. She turned around, keeping a calm face on her at all times.

The Magical Girl before her was someone she knows very well.

*Princess Deluge* .

She was one of the Man-Made Magical Girls that were created in an underground facility somewhere in S-City.

She was also the only survivor of the massacre in that facility.

Man-Made Magical Girls.

Ever since the incident, the Land of Magic has only ever been talking about that topic. Man-Made Magical Girls.

*Who made them?*

*How did they create them?*

*Are they dangerous?*

*Is the technology usable?*

They traced back the creation of this technology to Grim Heart. From there, the investigation only continued.



Grim Heart tried to create Magical Girls of her own. Someone tried to steal that from them, and now it's leaked out.

What's more, it seems that Grim Heart and another Magical Girl named Shufflin has died in an 'accident'.

Or so the information goes.

However, that's all in the past. Now, Pfle must think about the present situation. Standing in front of her was the Man-Made Magical Girl.

This Magical Girl knew a lot about Pfle.

Earlier this morning, she received a text from her, directly threatening Pfle. The fact that Deluge got her phone number in the beginning was a sign that she was serious.

She demanded a meeting for negotiations.

Her leverage was Shadow Gale.

She had revealed that she'd personally taken Shadow Gale hostage, and wanted to meet Pfle somewhere, to talk about her next plan of action.

Pfle agreed to meet in her office.

She prepared herself. In this situations, it's important not to make any kind of mistakes when dealing with the opponent.

Shadow Gale's life was at stake.

Shadow Gale...

Mamori... Pfle had tried hard to hide any association with herself and Mamori. Nobody in the Land of Magic would even realize they were close.

Whenever Pfle had a meeting, or a guest visited their house, Pfle would meet away from Shadow Gale. She tried her best to hide Shadow Gale's existence and relationship with Pfle.

Because they were close. The less that anyone knew that Pfle had emotional attachment to Shadow Gale, the safer it is for Shadow Gale.

But Deluge found out somehow. She doesn't know how, but Deluge found out.

If Pfle makes any mistakes in this negotiation, Shadow Gale might die.

"Well then, let's begin shall we? What are your terms?" asked Pfle.

“You’re going to help me,” said Deluge.

“Hm? How so?”

“I need Magical Girls. Strong Magical Girls. Three will do,” said Deluge.

“What for?”

“None of your business.”

“But it actually is. If I don’t know what you’re doing, I can’t find the Magical Girls that you need,” countered Pfle.

Deluge said nothing, staring at Pfle.

“A loss for words? You realize you have me under your thumb, right? You hold the cards. I can’t do anything to you, but I also can’t help you without knowing what you’re going to do,” said Pfle.

“...You’re too cooperative,” said Deluge.

Pfle smiled.

“If I make a wrong move, you’ll kill her, won’t you?” asked Pfle.

Deluge said nothing.

“If you fail the mission, you blame me, and you kill her as well. Despite anything you think about me, Deluge. Shadow Gale is my priority. So unless you tell me what you’re after, I can’t help you,” said Pfle.

“Fine. I’m looking for someone,” said Deluge.

“You’ll have to be more specific,” said Pfle.

“Do you know a Magical Girl named Puk Puck?”

“My my, that’s quite a target,” said Pfle, eyes widening.

“Not her. Her daughter, Premium Sachiko. The Osk faction wants to grab her, I’m going to catch her first,” said Deluge.

“You’re kidnapping someone as leverage so that you can kidnap someone else? That’s a lot of layers for a plan,” said Pfle.

“Can you give me what I need or not?” asked Deluge firmly.

“You realize what you’re about to do, right? Not only are you trying to tangle with one of the Three Sages, the highest ranking Magical Girls perhaps in the world. You’re not even taking a side. You’re going to clash with two Sages if you do this,” said Pflé.

“Don’t tell me you’re backing out because you’re afraid,” said Deluge.

“But of course. Any reasonable Magical Girl would think not twice, but thrice before angering one Sage. You’re going against two.”

“I already have information, I just need people,” said Deluge.

“Oh?”

“Premium Sachiko ran away from Puk Puck’s manor. She was last sighted in W-City, and both people from the Puk Faction and the Osk Faction are seeking her out, now do you *have* what I *need*?” asked Deluge again.

Pflé looked closely at Deluge.

A person can always be read by their expressions and movements. Their eyes, facial expressions, body language, tone of voice.

When someone speaks, they can always mask their true intentions, but Pflé had dealt with enough false flattery to understand how that works.

Now she can read people like a book.

Deluge’s eyes were calm, meaning she’s confident. She’s at peace with what she’s about to do, and knows exactly what to do.

However, her breathing was also uneven, and she was sweating lightly. That meant she was nervous about something.

Perhaps she’s only relying on one plan. If this negotiation fails, it would be bad for Deluge as well.

Which means Deluge was confident in the steps she needs to take, but she’s trying her hardest to make sure she doesn’t fail those steps.

Perhaps Deluge didn’t make the plan, or maybe she did. Not enough information to be sure, but it is strange how someone like Deluge would

know so much about the Land of Magic, or even about Pfle.

It's better to play her cards safe, for now.

"Alright. I'll help you, I'll find you some Magical Girls," said Pfle.

### ☆ **Princess Deluge**

This Magical Girl, Pfle, looked like an elegant lady. One you'd find somewhere in fancy manors perhaps.

At the same time, she also looked non-threatening and frail.

Deluge didn't know anything about Pfle, other than the fact that she works in the Human Resources Department.

She was also one of the highest-ranked Magical Girls there, which means she had connections and resources.

Which means that Deluge would have to find a way to make her cooperate.

She knew about Pfle's relationship with Shadow Gale, so Deluge kidnapped Shadow Gale. In her experience, hostages had always been good leverage.

Deluge couldn't care less about Pfle's relationship with Shadow Gale.

Pfle was a tool for her, she needed her help, but didn't want any emotional attachment whatsoever.

She had already steeled herself for what she was about to do.

Although her legs were shaking, she was confident in herself. She spent days planning this, so now...

...Now there's no turning back.

That night was a blurred memory for Deluge.

What happened was all a blurred memory.

Filuru died. Then everything just... blanked out. Deluge was angry, angry that everything that Filuru had fought for had been for nothing.

Angry that her death was needless.

Angry that her family, the Pure Elements, had died as well.

She let instinct take over, and although her opponent was a Spade Shufflin, she overpowered her easily.

She didn't even remember the details of the fight.

She laid in a pool of sweat and blood afterwards, the Shufflin barely able to be recognized, when she was picked up by others.

She was then asked a series of questions.

*Who were you with?*

*Where were you from?*



## *Tell us everything*

Deluge had repeated the story to them many times. Every time, she had to remember those memories, the memories of those who didn't make it.

She had to tell them *every* time they asked.

Deluge was sent to live in a house. It was the house of a Magical Girl, but Deluge didn't remember much.

It was all a blur at that moment. She had locked herself inside, not wanting to do anything at all, except for any basic necessities.

She didn't even want to change back into a human.

What's the point of that?

She can't go back to a normal life after what she went through. She's killed people, and she's also done things that make her more than human.

But at the same time, she's not even a real Magical Girl.

At least, not in the sense that the world knows.

Real Magical Girls don't need to transform with tiaras. They don't do what Deluge does. They help people in need.

Real Magical Girls patrol the world and do things other than just fight evil.

They help find lost people, they help with community service, and generally do everything they can to make people happy.

That was an ordinary Magical Girl.

Prism Cherry was an ordinary Magical Girl. Cherry always thought it was a bad thing, but if Deluge could turn back time, she'd rather not have met Cherry in the first place.

At least that way, Cherry could be safe, and continue making people happy. Being an ordinary Magical Girl isn't so bad.

She learned about Magical Girls from Blue Bell Candy.

When it was clear that living amongst Magical Girls didn't help her psyche, they decided to send in a specialist from Research and Development Division.

So they sent Deluge over to Blue Bell Candy.

Blue Bell was someone that tried her best to help Deluge. However, like almost everyone else that tried, it was impossible to break Deluge out of her shell.

Deluge always shut herself in when things were going bad.

It was her way of protecting herself from the bad things in the world. Make a wall around yourself, and don't let anything in.

People were trying to force her out, and Deluge didn't want to go back outside. Not after everything she'd lost.

Blue Bell genuinely looked worried.

She produced a bright green candy bar. It looked almost like a gumball, round and orb-like.

Blue Bell's Magical Skill, *To create candy that can change your mood* .

"Here, eat this. It'll make you feel better," said Blue Bell.

Deluge knew her magic. She knew that Blue Bell wanted Deluge to just be happy again, and... truth be told, Deluge did want to feel happy again.

She ate the candy.

It didn't really taste like anything. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't good. What happened was that it melted in her mouth instantly.

And then, seconds later, a smile came across Deluge's face.

And she began chuckling. Then she began laughing, tears streaming down her face.

Perhaps in the months since that massacre, this was the first time Deluge had actually smiled again.

And what caused her to smile was the memory of Prism Cherry.

It wasn't just a memory. Prism Cherry's face was clear in front of her. She saw her. She saw Cherry right in front of her.

Prism Cherry had her own Magical Skill. She always thought it was useless, but she entertained the Pure Elements with them.

Changing what's inside a mirror. That was always fun. Deluge laughed along with her.

Blue Bell's magic wasn't just affecting moods, it somehow affected the atmosphere of the person eating her candies.

Their emotions don't just change but... it's hard to put in words.

When she ate the candies that made her happy, she saw Prism Cherry in front of her. She seemed real, and that was what made her happy.

It's like she was seeing an old memory of her and her friends.

She ate more of them, and she saw Quake, Inferno, Tempest, and Cherry, all smiling at her, greeting her, being happy.

She can hear their voices clear as day. Not like you were imagining them, but as if they were there.

But alas, Deluge would reach out to them... and she couldn't.

Because they're still gone.

Cherry, Quake, Inferno, Tempest.

All of them were dead. All of them were killed.

Blue Bell was the only one who could help Deluge see them again, or at least make her feel the emotions from the past.

In the day, Deluge would start her rehabilitation with Blue Bell, and she would eat her candy, meeting her old friends again, or at least echoes of her friends.

At night, Deluge slept on her bed, unable to close her eyes. Sometimes she wishes she can see them one more time. Sometimes she'd hear

things and assume it's them. She never could sleep. She always waited for a chance to meet them again.

She knows she can't keep doing this, but she couldn't help herself.

However, now was the time to take action. Now was the time to find out the conspirators behind everything.

The ones who killed her friends, the web of shadows that she'll uncover.

Deluge will find it all, for their sake.

## ☆ **Pfle**

A knock came at the door.

"Come in," said Pfle.

"Excuse us," said a Magical Girl in glasses, as she entered the door. Two other Magical Girls entered after her.

The first Magical Girl was a Magical Girl clad in pink, with glasses and what seemed to be a cake-like decoration on her hair, as well as a frosting-like tail.

The second Magical Girl wore a valedictorian's cap, as well as a long white graduation robe, with an owl looking decoration at her waist. Green hair, red eyes.

The third was clad in darkness, a black skintight suit, like a costume. A dress and dark roses adorned her back.

"So this is the girl who beat Patricia, huh?" said the valedictorian.

"Huh!? She beat Patricia?" asked the glasses girl.

"She defeated her entire mercenary group, it seems," said Pfle.

"Oh my... Now I'm actually scared to leave home," said the glasses girl.

"Patricia's pretty strong, and you're pretty young yourself. You must mean business, then," said the valedictorian.

The dark Magical Girl stepped forward, hands folded.

“Patricia was a good woman. You killed her. That makes you a villain, right?” she said, staring at Deluge, who stared back.

Pfle came between them,

“Let’s introduce each other, then, shall we?”

Pfle pointed at the glasses Magical Girl.

“This is Glassianne, she’ll be very helpful for scouting,” said Pfle.

She proceeded towards the valedictorian.

“This is Monoshiri Mi-Chan, an intelligent girl. She’ll be useful as well,” said Pfle.

She then introduced the dark Magical Girl.

“Finally, this is Dark Cutie. She’s the leader of their group. She’s more powerful than you probalby think,” said Pfle.

Pfle knew all three of these Magical Girls.

Glassianne and Mi-Chan looked like normal everyday Magical Girls. They could easily blend in with society, and wouldn’t be considered a threat by other Magical Girls by looks alone.

Dark Cutie, however, never left her house unless she needed to. She was quite famous, being a Cutie, as well as appearing in Anime as well.

In the Land of Magic, she was like a celebrity.

Glassianne was skilled in tracking and espionage. She was the most skilled for scouting out areas before the team would go in.

Mi-Chan was good at gathering intelligence, planning, and preparations. Her smarts and adaptation ability helps her in the field.

Dark Cutie was the leader, and she was good in stealth and assassination tactics. Being able to use almost anything for a weapon, and at home in the shadows.

All three of these Magical Girls are capable of combat, and all three of them are very expensive to hire.

Separately, they didn't seem like a team, but they were, and Pfle had hired only the best.

The three of them were already gazing at Deluge. They know that she was one to watch out for.

Mi-Chan, still keeping her eyes locked on Deluge, spoke to Pfle,

"So... this is a request from HR, right?"

"Correct," said Pfle.

"Mhm... Our client's her?"

"She's the one. You're under her command for now. Deluge, I hope you do utilize them well. I've taken my resources to gather them, now the ball is on your court, so to speak," said Pfle.

The three Magical Girls and Deluge continued to lock eyes. Both parties know that the other is dangerous, and Pfle could sense that Deluge knew that there was no turning back anymore.

## ☆ **Princess Deluge**

Deluge laid down on her bed.

She held the papers in her hand. They were files regarding the Magical Girls that Pfle recruited to her aid.

Data on their abilities, how they can be useful, and how to best utilize their skills.

This was really happening. Deluge can finally get answers. Deluge can finally get revenge. Now her family won't have to die in vain.

How did she get here...

...It started one day, when Deluge had thought she'd healed. When she thought she had already moved on.

She met with Blue Bell one day, in another one of their rehab sessions. As usual, Deluge talked a bit about herself, but she decided it was time to move on and not become passive.

“I want to learn how to be a proper Magical Girl,” said Deluge.

Blue Bell was shocked. She looked at Deluge for a bit, unsure of how to proceed.

“Deluge, are you saying...”

“I want you to teach me, Blue Bell. Please?”

Blue Bell smiled. Deluge saw tears streaming down her face. It's only been a month since she had lost everything, but those days were filled with sadness for Deluge.

So now, when Deluge said that she's willing to learn to become a proper Magical Girl, that made Blue Bell happy enough to cry tears of joy.

“Oh, Deluge! You've come so far! I'll help you out, okay?”

Then Blue Bell began their tour around the Land of Magic. Blue Bell herself had access to some of the more official areas, so she can show Deluge around.

She brought Deluge to an administrator, who Deluge followed for a while, as she scouted for potential new Magical Girls. Then, Deluge watched as she meticulously selected those with Magical Potential, as well as the right traits.

She also told Deluge about how normal Magical Girl selection tests were done, and how other Magical Girls were selected.

She also taught them about mascots, their importance, and what they mean for Magical Girls.

Afterwards, Blue Bell took Deluge to Research and Development. There, Mages and Magical Girls alike worked together to create new magical items to help further Magical Girls.

Deluge could see Magical Phones being created, as well as several different items being enchanted. According to Blue Bell, those would be



used as Magical Items, given only to higher ranked Magical Girls. Mostly on the field.

Finally, Blue Bell took her to the Grand Library. It was a huge room full of archives of the history of the Land of Magic and Magical Girls alike.

There, Deluge learned all she could about Magical Girls, their society, and the Land of Magic.

She read all the books, learned all she can, and digested the inner workings of the Land of Magic. The various Divisions, what distinguishes a Magical Girl, Mage, and Mascot. Recent events, Old history, famous historical figures.

Blue Bell was like a tour guide, teaching Deluge all she needed to know.

“Alright, where do you want to go next?” asked Blue Bell.

“Can you take me back to S-City? Back to my base?” asked Deluge.

Blue Bell was hesitant. She didn’t know if she wanted to.

“Please, Blue Bell? I need closure...” said Deluge.

They arrived.

The facility was taped, and it was clear that no one was allowed to enter it. Abandoned, enough so that no human would even bother going in.

But Deluge knows what was really in there.

Blue Bell and Deluge entered the facility, and Deluge opened the door to the basement. There was no password this time, the Land of Magic picked this clean.

She went downstairs, and she passed through familiar rooms.

The training areas.

This was nostalgic for Deluge.

The Water Room, the Forest Room, the Desert Room, the Mountain Room.

Finally...

...They reached the Briefing Room.

This was the room that the Pure Elements spent the most time at, and is where Deluge spent time with her family.

Memories started floating back to her.

Prism Cherry greeted her, waving her hand at Deluge. Deluge remembered this. Deluge happily greeted Cherry back.

They came here after school, but Cherry came at a bad time. Inferno was scolding Tempest because of something Deluge didn't really understand.

Inferno and Tempest knew each other in real life. Deluge usually stayed out of their business.

Maybe she should have intervened back then.

Tempest ran over to Quake, she cried and cried and hugged Quake.

"Oh, come on, don't tattletale now!" said Inferno.

"Okay, you two, quit it. Hey, Tempest. Hey, it's okay, alright? Hey, c'mon, Cherry's watching," said Quake, comforting Tempest with a pat on the head.

"Did I come at a bad time?" said Cherry.

Deluge felt a tear drip down her face. She smiled, but at the same time, she felt really sad. But more importantly, this place brought so many strong emotions to her.

That was the moment.

That was when the fire ignited in her heart.

"Blue Bell. The Land of Magic investigated this place, right?" asked Deluge.

“Yeah?”

“Do you know if they’re still researching more of me?”

“Um...”

“If you know, please tell me.”

“Deluge, I don’t think-”

“I need closure, Blue Bell. Please...”

And now, Deluge found a lead. With that lead, she found another Man-Made Magical Girl, and she found more information on Grim Heart.

She found information on the people who were responsible.

She can finally set things right.

## ☆ **Pfle**

Pfle poured black tea while eating some breakfast.

Magical Girls don’t need sustenance and nutrition. There really was no need for Pfle to drink and eat, but it was tradition.

A morning ritual, and one that doesn’t go away lightly.

Besides, it gave her room to think.

How did Deluge know about Puk Puck, Osk, Premium Sachiko, and all of that kind of information.

Not even Pfle was privy to those yet.

Pfle worked in the Human Resources Division, which gave her access to almost all Magical Girls’ personal information.

She built a network of contacts, which also included Magical Girls in other Divisions, in order to more easily observe the political landscape of the Land of Magic.

Yet, even with that, she still can’t penetrate the higher level Divisions.

The Homeland Divisions as well as the Three Sages, who were strict in their secrets.

She has yet to be able to infiltrate neither the Puk Faction nor the Osk Faction.

Deluge, who had been raised far away from normal Magical Girls, and had only just been introduced to the Land of Magic, somehow knew information about not only the Puk Faction, but the location of their escapee, and the Osk Faction's plans.

Pfle could easily confirm if the rumors were true, but she didn't want to compromise anything, in case it would put Shadow Gale in danger.

There's also a strange thing that's been plaguing Pfle's mind lately.

A blank in her memory. A clear blank, like when she forgot about her selection tests. This blank, she didn't know who or what caused it, but she'll also have to investigate that too.

## *Knock Knock*

“Come in,” said Pfle.

The door opened, and Monoshiri Mi-Chan approached Pfle.

“It’s a little early to call me here, isn’t it?” asked Mi-Chan.

“Perhaps, but I wanted your opinion before I send you with Deluge.”

“My opinion on Deluge?”

Pfle nodded.

“As long as she doesn’t mess up, we should work together just fine,” said Mi-Chan.

“Do note that I can’t guarantee your safety,” said Pfle.

“We can handle it.”

“Alright. If you’re confident then, she should be preparing something soon,” said Pfle.

“Roger that, boss,” said Mi-Chan as she stood up.

“Oh, Mi-Chan, one more thing,” said Pfle.

Mi-Chan looked back, raising her eyebrow.

“Could you change my tea for a bit? The taste is rather bitter. I think I’m in the mood for some Konbu,” said Pfle.

Mi-Chan shrugged, “Alright, just make sure the tea’s not dirty or anything.”

Pfle placed the teacup on the table. The ripples on the water began to relax.

Mi-Chan reached out her arm, and touched the cup. Then, she spoke,

“ *Clean Tea -> Green Tea .*”

The tea changed from the usual Black Tea to a Konbu, which would also be known as Green Tea in some languages.

“My thanks, Mi-Chan,” said Pfle.

Mi-Chan tipped her hat, and left the room.

## ☆ **Glassianne**

Glassianne waited for Mi-Chan. She was in a backyard of sorts, or at least a fancy garden. Surrounding her were objects of luxury.

Seeing them all made Glassianne a bit jealous.

Glassianne normally opens a cake shop once a month. She sets up in a nearby Ramen store and refurbishes it. As a result, the cake shop she opens isn't usually fancy.

However, she usually works along with a Patissier Magical Girl, who is only available on those days of the month.

The Patissier Magical Girl tends to make the cakes, and Glassianne and her sell a bunch of them.

Their customers always seem to be happy.

*Small shop but great quality!*

*Love your cakes. I come here every month!*

*What's your secret? Magic?*

Today was supposed to be the day that the cake shop would open, but Glassianne had a job to do, so she had to sacrifice that for now.

So when everyone involved in the job was late to the meeting, of course Glassianne got a bit annoyed.

Mi-Chan said that she was going to a public library earlier in the morning that just opened today, to sharpen up her knowledge.

She shouldn't be *this* late, at least.

To top it off, their partner, *Princess Deluge*, was very uncooperative.

She didn't tell them anything other than "We're going to capture Premium Sachiko." No plan, no reasoning, just that.

Glassianne was hired for the job, so she had no right to say further, but at the very least, Deluge could've made it easier on them.

Deluge ignored her calls and texts, especially the ones asking to share their powers so they can optimize their usage.

Surrounding the area were four sheets of black wings, watching Glassianne.

Although she rarely sees them, she knows what they are. These are called *Demons*, and Glassianne has encountered them once before.

The lower-level, less intelligent ones are often used as sentry guards by Mages, but the more dangerous ones are forbidden.

However, the types that Deluge had were those that Glassianne had never seen herself.

A new model?

How did a Magical Girl like Deluge get their hands on new Demon models, let alone understand how to create and control them?

Whatever the case, it's clear that Deluge is dangerous, and Glassianne shouldn't try fighting her anytime soon.

"Hey hey! Sorry to keep you waiting! I'm here now!"

Mi-Chan's voice came out, as she carried some papers and entered through the door to the backyard.

"Oh, it's fine, Mi-Chan!" said Glassianne smiling.

"Annie, from the way you've been standing there, I kinda felt bad, hence my apologies!" said Mi-Chan as she approached Glassianne.

"Ah, no, no! Was I really just idling around? It's not your fault, Mi-Chan! It's fine, really. Besides, you can get really loud once you start working. I like the quiet."

The two Magical Girls laughed.

In the side, was Dark Cutie, folding her arms and watching silently.

Glassianne adjusted her glasses.

Mi-Chan straightened her white collar.

“This job’s gonna be the hardest one we’ve dealt with yet. Our new boss isn’t exactly cooperative either, so...” said Mi-Chan.

“Chances of death are high, huh? Well... we’ll make the best of it,” said Glassianne.

“With the Three Sages involved, whew... Well, we took the job, so no turning back now. Best be prepared. No telling what they’re gonna throw at us,” said Mi-Chan.

Mi-Chan, Glassianne, and Dark Cutie were often hired for these kinds of jobs. They were good for infiltration, hunting, assassination, and other kinds of work like this.

However, their new boss, Deluge, was rather uncooperative.

Not only that, their opponents are supposedly two of the Three Sages, so that brings a whole new series of problems on its own, with or without Deluge.

“Alright, OPERATION START!” shouted Mi-Chan.

“First, we figure out what the Puk faction is doing. Annie can scout around, right?” said Mi-Chan.

“In W-City? That should be a piece of cake!” said Glassianne.

Mi-Chan was never one for extreme shouting. She was a girl who enjoyed analyzing things and knowledge, for the most part.

Normally, when giving orders, she doesn’t really shout it out, but with Deluge on the team, it was necessary. Mostly due to the three’s team leader, Dark Cutie.

Dark Cutie isn’t one for caring about people.

However, she also knows the roles of her teammates, and would just leave it to them and do her own part when necessary.

Mi-Chan would be the sub-leader, since she’s the one that usually makes all the plans, despite Dark Cutie being the leader of the team



specifically.

If Deluge didn't know the dynamics of their team, she'd be out of synch, so it was up to them to plan around her.

Not only that, but Deluge rarely speaks herself, which makes it hard to discuss a plan.

Mi-Chan is smart enough to let Deluge know of their strategies without threatening Deluge herself.

It's also important for Deluge to understand just how their team worked.

Dark Cutie was a high profile Magical Girl. Not only is she an Anime star, she has dark costumes, dark eyes, and the way she looks at you might intimidate people. A quick glance at Dark Cutie, and people tend to stay away, or at least know that she can pick a fight.

On the other hand, a scholar's uniform, and a Magical Girl with a cake-theme and glasses. Those kinds of uniforms are mostly looked upon as "sweet and innocent", which Mi-Chan and Glassianne use to their advantage.

In their line of work, it's important not to stand out too much as a threat. After all, the element of surprise is always a game changer.

Speaking of their line of work, Glassianne had already asked Dark Cutie what she thought of Deluge.

"She seems like a villainous girl," said Dark Cutie, answering bluntly and directly.

Deluge was supposedly the one that took down Patricia and her troupe. Thus, Dark Cutie classified her as villainous, considering Patricia's group were usually hired as bodyguards.

For one thing, this is actually a good thing for Deluge. Dark Cutie liked villains and villainous types. Glassianne can't exactly understand why, but as long as Dark Cutie considers Deluge a friend, she's fine with it.

"Right then, why don't we stop standing around in this garden and actually get inside for a bit?" offered Mi-Chan.

Dark Cutie moved, approaching the two, and nodded.

Glassianne and Deluge followed Mi-Chan inside, but just before that...

“DELUGE! DELUGE!”

A Magical Girl with flowers on her back, lily-of-the-lake flowers, ran across the gate to the garden, all the way towards Deluge.

Deluge had a face of shock and annoyance,

“Wha... What are *you* doing here?” asked Deluge.

“I should be asking *you* that question! What’s going on, Deluge? If you’re doing something, you need to tell me! Please don’t do anything rash!” said the lily Magical Girl.

Dark Cutie stared at the two.

Glassianne adjusted her glasses.

Mi-Chan sighed.

She approached Deluge, and with a soft smile, and a quiet tone, she asked nicely.

“Deluge, excuse me a bit,” said Mi-Chan, dragging Deluge away.

She looked Deluge in the eye, and Mi-Chan’s expression was calm, smiling, polite.

Glassianne understood what Mi-Chan’s intention was. Even Dark Cutie was ready. In their line of work, it’s important that no one know what they’re doing.

They can’t have random Magical Girls walk into them.

“That Magical Girl. Is she a *friend* ?” asked Mi-Chan.

Deluge looked at Mi-Chan, the two locking eyes with each other. Without hesitation, Deluge nodded,

“She’s with me,” said Deluge.

Mi-Chan took a deep breath and nodded.

Glassianne breathed a sigh of relief. Dark Cutie looked away from the lily Magical Girl.

This is going to be a rough partnership.

### ☆ **Blue Bell Candy**

When Blue Bell first volunteered to help Deluge, it was mostly due to curiosity and the rarity of Deluge's kind.

Man-Made Magical Girls weren't something you see everyday.

Blue Bell was curious. Blue Bell wanted to understand and know more.

Eventually, she was selected as Deluge's caretaker. So she went straight to the house where Deluge was kept.

She immediately felt guilty when she saw her.

There she was, Princess Deluge, the Man-Made Magical Girl.

She was sitting there alone, looking forwards into the distance. There was almost nothing on those eyes.

## *The poor girl*

Originally, Blue Bell wanted to conduct research on Deluge. She wanted to find out more about the Man-Made Magical Girl process, but after seeing Deluge like that, she changed her objective.

Instead of researching, she wanted to care for her, to become her caretaker, and help her rehabilitate.

Deluge looked like any other Magical Girl. Her features were more beautiful than any human can hope to achieve, her outfit was out of this world, with a tiara and a large blue shining gem on it.

However, that doesn't change the fact that she's Man-Made.

Plenty of Magical Girls in the Research and Development Division had said some things about Deluge, speculating on how she transformed.

Some said mean things, things that Blue Bell immediately stood up against. This earned her the ire of the Division members.

She was even almost brought out of the project, because her objective was to study Deluge, not to get close to her.

Blue Bell had never faced direct opposition from R&D before in her life, but now she's being opposed, and she's standing her ground.

She continued to rehab with Deluge, trying her best to calm her down, and getting to know her more, approaching her as a friend.

Eventually, Deluge began to open up to her. She began to tell her more and more about herself. It wasn't much, Deluge wouldn't reveal that much to Blue Bell just yet.

Slow and steady, that's how you best handle these things. Deluge was just afraid to open herself to others after what happened, Blue Bell was sure that was the reason.

Deluge then began asking Blue Bell for guidance.

Blue Bell allowed Deluge to do whatever she wanted, and helped her with whatever she needed.

Sometimes Deluge would ask Blue Bell things that were hard, but if it would help Deluge, Blue Bell would do it.

Blue Bell was the only one who wanted to open herself to Deluge. Many other Magical Girls were unsure of her, due to her status.

But Blue Bell didn't care. Blue Bell wouldn't leave Deluge alone. If Blue Bell wasn't with her, Deluge would be alone again. If Deluge was alone, she'd be an empty shell. If she were a shell, she'd be broken, and she'd disappear.

Who knows what she'll do.

Did she even have the mental strength of a Magical Girl?

Blue Bell had to help her.

One day, Deluge called for Blue Bell, and in their rehab sessions, Deluge brought something to show Blue Bell.

It was a sketchbook.

Inside were drawings of smiling children, playing happily in the park. On other pages, were drawings of Deluge and other Magical Girls like her.

"It's beautiful," said Blue Bell.

"It is, isn't it?" said Deluge, smiling.

Blue Bell noticed that Deluge was crying, and there were tears on her face when she looked at those images.

"Hey, hey, you okay?" asked Blue Bell.

Deluge wiped away those tears, and looked at the sketchbook. "I'm fine... Thank you, Blue Bell."

"Whose sketchbook is it?" asked Blue Bell.

"Someone really close to me," replied Deluge.

"It's good that you keep those objects, but you need to be careful not to be attached to it for too long, okay?"

"I kept it, because I made a promise to her," said Deluge.

Blue Bell understood that Deluge still hasn't moved on from her friends' deaths. The sketchbook must've belonged to someone from her past.

Blue Bell and Deluge got closer, and finally, Deluge wanted to be shown around the Land of Magic.

And Deluge asked Blue Bell the impossible once again.

"If you know anything about anyone researching Man-Made Magical Girls. Please... I need to know... I need closure," said Deluge.

Blue Bell hesitated...

...But in the end, she told her what she knew.

That day, Blue Bell had received information that Deluge was headed to the Research and Development HQ in the Land of Magic.

Blue Bell felt uneasy, mostly because Deluge wasn't too well-liked by most Magical Girls.

Due to her not being created legitimately, she was treated as an illegal refugee, staying in the Land of Magic and mooching off their resources.

Not only that, people fear what they don't know, and nobody really understood how Deluge worked, at least as far as being a Magical Girl.

That's why they tried their best to recreate the technology, and the research. R&D has been trying to produce their own versions of Man-Made Magical Girls.

Their research was still preliminary though, and the only one that really understood the most was Deluge, not that she was cooperative.

Still, Blue Bell felt uneasy.

She took the bus to the R&D HQ, and tried her best not to think about it.

However, when she got there, it looks like the worst has come to pass. Entering the place, she found it nearly deserted.

She rushed straight to the Man-Made Magical Girl section of the labs, and there, she saw it.

Destruction, chaos, the room was a mess.

Equipment related to Man-Made Magical Girls, research notes, all of them were gone.

It looked like several Man-Made Magical Girls had also been created, and they were gone too.

The Magical Girls and Mages stationed there were all unconscious and badly bleeding, beaten up by someone.

The demons stationed as guards were also killed and destroyed, and it looked like someone made better models of demons and took them away, not bothering to erase the evidence. Those models were illegal...

*Oh no...*

Blue Bell went to Deluge's room. Although they shared the same house, Blue Bell always allowed Deluge her own privacy. She didn't want to feel like someone watching over her, she wanted to be a friend.

There, she found folders in Deluge's bed, and in the folders, were files of some Magical Girls.

The files included their names, and a meeting point set up the next day.

Blue Bell discarded all thoughts and went straight after the next day, her only thoughts are of Deluge.

### ☆ **Monoshiri Mi-Chan**

It seems like Deluge knew the lily Magical Girl.

It wasn't Mi-Chan's business to interrupt them, nor could she get rid of her if Deluge knew her. Still, it was bad if random Magical Girls just showed up here, Deluge should've been more careful.

Deluge and the lily Magical Girl were talking about something. Mi-Chan didn't exactly want to know what. Again, it's none of her business.

They were already inside the building. A large table was separating them. Dark Cutie, Glassianne, and Mi-Chan were sitting, while Deluge

and the Lily Magical Girl were talking elsewhere.

“Wonder who she is,” muttered Mi-Chan to Glassianne.

“They seem to know each other,” said Glassianne.

“Yeah, and they’ve been talking for a while, too”

“Maybe they’re friends.”

“Maybe. Hey, you want me to make you some tea?”

“I drank some already, if I drink anymore, my stomach will be full of water,” said Glassianne chuckling.

“Ah well, suit yourself! Oh, I actually almost forgot. Promised to do this for a friend, but I got a favor to ask,” said Mi-Chan.

“Hm? What is it?” asked Glassianne.

“Oh, not to you, to our one and only leader right there,” said Mi-Chan.

Dark Cutie raised her head, taking interest.

Mi-Chan took out three colored papers from her bag, and she passed them across the table to Dark Cutie.

“Friend of mine wanted your autograph. If you don’t mind, of course,” said Mi-Chan.

Dark Cutie tilted her head, and looked at the paper. She then grabbed something out of her outfit, it was some colored markers.

She scribbled three autographs and signed it on each colored paper.

“Wow! I should’ve known that Dark Cutie herself would be prepared for that. You are a celebrity after all,” said Glassianne.

“Not *just* a celebrity. You’re in a Cutie Healer show, that’s a big deal, y’know? There’s like, what, over 20 seasons, now?” said Mi-Chan.

“You know I’ve tried to be in an Anime myself, once!”

“Seriously? How’d it go?”

“Well, I auditioned, and the working title was supposed to be *Super Glassis* ! Because, you know, I guess the pun with Glasses and Sis and



all that.”

“Did you make it?”

“Err... ehehe... Well, they tried to pitch it as a young educational kid’s show, but I don’t think it ever took off past development,” said Glassianne nervously.

Mi-Chan knew about Dark Cutie.

She was one of the main characters of *Cutie Healer Galaxy* . One of the seasons in the long running *Cutie Healer* franchise.

At some point, someone in Public Relations got shafted. It was the director, or the head, or the screenwriter, or... someone.

Mi-Chan didn’t remember the details. What she does know is that there was a scandal involved.

And the result of that was a changing of the guard. That resulted in Dark Cutie being shifted to a more villainous role for some reason or another.

She wasn’t that well received either, and got written off in the middle of the season. Mi-Chan hadn’t watched much *Cutie Healer* , but being written off tended to mean you were either killed off for good, or there’s a chance of you coming back.

Anyone that got that treatment wouldn’t have taken it lightly.

Mi-Chan only ever visited Dark Cutie’s home once.

It was an apartment complex somewhere in town. Pretty old, not really luxurious and certainly not somewhere you’d find a celebrity.

When she visited, Dark Cutie was watching a DVD of *Cutie Healer Galaxy* . She was seeing a scene where she was just defeated by the heroes, and retreated away elsewhere.

The real Dark Cutie turned off the DVD, and switched to the news. Some foreign news about a bombing or something.

Either way, Mi-Chan had no idea how Dark Cutie felt about the whole thing.

“By the way, I heard some news about the next season of *Cutie Healer*!” said Glassianne.

“Oh? They already have news?”

“Not just news, it looks like they already casted someone as the new protagonist! We’ve got another Cutie! The trials are rough, though.”

“I can imagine, being considered for a Cutie role is unbelievably hard. How’d you know about it?” asked Mi-Chan.

“I suppose for a smart knowledgeable Magical Girl, you rarely check social networks, Mi-Chan. Rumors and news are already spreading, you just have to know where to look,” said Glassianne winking.

“Well, I don’t usually follow those kinds of things, anyway,” said Mi-Chan.

“Why not? An Anime is a dream job for a Magical Girl, it’s the highest paying job there is! You won’t even need to worry, as long as you’re still in season! You know, I almost got my own Anime show!”

“You told me earlier. Magical Glassis or something, right?”

“It’s *Super* Glassis! Get it right, Mi-Chan”

Mi-Chan chuckled to herself.

Getting an Anime adaptation is a status symbol for Magical Girls. But it’s also quite an achievement, and a bit dramatic.

Magical Girls that get Anime are guaranteed to have successful lives, so long as they’re still running in that Anime.

You don’t even have to be a public working Magical Girl to get an Anime.

Someone working behind-the-scenes like Mi-Chan and Glassianne could also get an Anime. Of course, Mi-Chan had no interest in that, but Glassianne might want her own Anime.

Mi-Chan can't fault her for that.

This line of work isn't exactly the kind you can talk to your friends about, and Glassianne was far more sociable than both Mi-Chan and Dark Cutie.

"Oh, whoops. Looks like they caught the leaker of the *Cutie Healer* news. I thought she was anonymous," said Glassianne.

"You're not really anonymous on the internet unless you actually act like a different person. Typing tendencies are just like talking tendencies. There's tics that people can exploit. Whoever's in charge of the show knows everyone that knows the show, and probably cross-referenced it," said Mi-Chan.

"You're a smart one, Mi-Chan. You know you really should consider getting an Anime, I'm sure you'll fit right in."

"I'm my own Magical Girl, Annie. I don't need an Anime to convince myself that I'm fine with my life."

"Suit yourself!"

"Here you go," said Dark Cutie suddenly, passing the colored papers back to Mi-Chan.

On each paper was a stylized autograph of Dark Cutie, and on the corner of each paper was a chibi SD-styled face of Dark Cutie winking.

"Thank you very much, I'll be sure to pass this on," said Mi-Chan.

"Oh, Dark Cutie, do you do social media?" asked Glassianne.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Don't see why I should," said Dark Cutie.

"See? Our leader's a smart girl. In this line of work, social media's just gonna give you more attention than you need," said Mi-Chan smiling.

"Hmph, suit yourselves, girls!" said Glassianne.

“You two have heard of Patricia’s ambush, right?” asked Dark Cutie, immediately changing the topic.

“Sort of,” replied Mi-Chan.

“You know how Patricia was defeated?” asked Dark Cutie.

“Yeah, Deluge did it, supposedly. She’s young but she’s strong,” said Mi-Chan.

“That’s not what I’m asking. I’m asking if you know the details. Sightings said there was a trident involved,” said Dark Cutie.

“I don’t know, and I really don’t think we should pry, not yet,” said Mi-Chan.

As if on cue, Deluge walked over to the rest of them. Her face was that of anger, but then she somehow also looked pleased.

“I have information from my scouts. The Puk Faction had a fight with the Osk Faction in W-City at the park there. I’m headed there right now,” said Deluge.

Four demon wings instantly grabbed Deluge, and she flew away.

Mi-Chan sighed and shook her head.

“Brash and young... she didn’t even *wait* for us. Alright, time to move this table outside, we gotta catch up,” said Mi-Chan.

The trio moved the table outside, and the lily Magical Girl nervously walked towards them.

Mi-Chan placed her hands on the table. She can change this object easily to what she needed.

“ *Counter -> Pos-ter* ”

The table changed to a long sheet of poster paper. Mi-Chan held the left edge, Glassianne held the right edge.

They placed it upright, so that it would form a long horizontal strip.

Dark Cutie stood in front of it, and made sure the sun’s shadow had casted it upon her.

She stretched her arms to the sides, casting a large black shadow on the poster paper. She materialized them into solid wings that attached themselves to her.

Mi-Chan and Glassianne got into position, and Dark Cutie grabbed both of them as she began flying with her shadow wings.

Then the Lily Magical Girl jumped at the last moment, grabbing onto Dark Cutie's legs.

"W-Wait! Please take me with you! I can't just leave Deluge alone!"

"Deluge's friend, right? Alright, you can come. It's gonna be dangerous though, but you can't exactly protect yourself here, so it's probably safer with us."

# Interlude

## ☆ Shadow Gale

The Armor Magical Girl was still staring at her.

She closed the door to the exit. That door was extremely heavy, even for Magical Girls, and the Armor Girl just closed it like it was nothing.

Shadow Gale never really got a good look at the Armor Girl before, she was too busy piggybacking on Patricia's back to even notice.

Only now did she see her.

Clad in armor, no emotion showing due to her helmet, standing in a very strange posture, was a Magical Girl.

Looked more like a horror movie villain.

"...What are you?" asked Shadow Gale.

She was scared. This is someone she's never exactly met before, and the strength of this Armor Girl was incredible.

Not only that, she seemed to be able to keep up with Patricia, which was something that normal Magical Girls would have a hard time doing.

Where was she?

Who was this Armor Girl?

There was a clanking noise. The Armor Girl was tilting her head sideways.

Then she raised her arms, and she began waving.

Gestures?

Can she not speak? Can she only communicate with gestures?

Shadow Gale stood up.

"Could I leave this place?" she asked the Armor Girl.

Again, the Armor Girl simply tilted her head. Maybe she didn't understand spoken words? Maybe she needed to be communicated via

gestures too.

What kind of Magical Girl is that?

Shadow Gale pointed towards the door, and then she curved her arms, and began moving it back and forth.

She also began walking in place really fast.

She was imitating running.

‘Let me out’ is what she was trying to say.

The Armor Girl raised her right palm and made a stop signal to Shadow Gale. She also shook her head.

Guess that’s a no.

Shadow Gale sighed.

She had to escape. There were things she needed to stop. Pfle’s plan can’t be put into motion. If Snow White tried to investigate Pfle, and Pfle won’t cooperate, the killswitch was supposed to be Shadow Gale.

Shadow Gale was supposed to be the last resort if Pfle goes completely over the edge, but she can’t do that if she’s being kept.

Why was she being kept?

Was she being kidnapped for a ransom? Negotiation?

Did they have a grudge against Pfle? Was this related to Pfle’s job? Was this related to the Land of Magic and not Pfle specifically? After all, Pfle was Human Resources.

She wondered if these people knew about Shadow Gale herself. They probably saw her as only a servant of Pfle. It would make sense, as both her and Pfle gave out this image.

Shadow Gale took a deep breath.

“Well, if I’m going to be staying here, could I at least get some entertainment? A TV maybe?” asked Shadow Gale.

The Armor Girl tilted her head again.

“TV? Television?”

She tilted her head to the other side.

Oh right.

Gestures only.

Shadow Gale made a rectangle with her arms, then she mimicked watching into the rectangle, and she sat down, watching the rectangle in her arm.

“Television,” she mouthed while miming it.

The Armor Girl clapped her hands and nodded, she immediately left the room and closed the door.

Well I guess that answers it. She and probably her captors don't know about Shadow Gale's powers.

If she got a television she could modify it into so many things. Probably nothing too major, since she still needed it to look like a television, and she didn't have many tools to work with.

Some things she thought of.

A spy camera.

An encrypted video messaging system.

A broadcasting device. She could tell Pfle where she was, and maybe Pfle could make a plan to get her out.

...Or... Could she somehow modify the TV to shoot out death rays instead of light rays?

Okay, maybe not death. Sleep rays?

Was that a thing?

The Armor Girl came back running, with a huge cardboard box. She carried it back to the room and dropped it in front of Shadow Gale.

She nodded and pointed to the box.



Shadow Gale took a deep breath, and slowly, she opened the box, and she looked inside, only to find...

...A miniature portable toilet.

This wasn't what she asked for.

She looked at the Armor Girl with a nervous smile. The Armor Girl gave a thumbs up and nodded.

Gesture communication was going to be harder than she thought.

# Chapter 3: Greetings from the Amusement Park

## ☆ Sorami Nakano

Sorami was very relieved.

Not just because she survived an attack from the Osk Faction, but also because Snow White and Uluru are actually finding some common ground.

Snow White and Uluru's powers were compatible, given the right circumstances.

Snow White just needs to read the fact that Uluru doubts her own truths in order to discover that they're lies.

In this way, Snow White should be unaffected by Uluru's powers, and they can work together to incapacitate any enemies.

This method only works in special circumstances, however. If Uluru genuinely believes her words, then Snow White shouldn't be able to detect any doubts.

The two had discussed this over to find the best way to work together, and it looked like Uluru was actually happier than before.

It's probably because she took care of the Osk faction attackers all by herself.

The Osk faction...

...What were they after? Why were they also targeting Sachiko? Those Magical Girls, if they hadn't been stopped by Uluru's magic, they would've killed them on the spot. Sorami was sure of it.

*Oh Sachiko, why couldn't you just stay home where it's safe?*

However, Sorami had to focus on the now, not the what could have beens.

Uluru's cheeks were bright red and she was smiling widely. She must be super proud of herself. Sorami knew this behavior.

Uluru must be thinking of how to report to Puk Puck.

Puk Puck assigned Uluru to be the captain of the guard, but Uluru never really encountered any dangerous enemies inside the Puk manor.

Incapacitating Osk faction soldiers with her magic? Now *that* would definitely make Puk Puck proud of Uluru.

Uluru was always happy when Puk Puck showed how proud she was of her. Uluru tries her best, but she knows that she can't really prove herself without actually defeating an enemy.

She walked faster than before, at a brisk pace, smiling all the way. They were still looking for Sachiko, but Uluru's in a better mood today.

Ever since the ambush, however, Sorami's job has gotten a lot harder.

Not only did she have to look for Sachiko, but she also has to look for any possibility of Osk Magical Girls hiding out somewhere.

Fal can detect Magical Girls with his radar, Snow White could detect what a Magical Girl was feeling, and in case of Sachiko, she should be stressed out, but Sorami had to see inside buildings in order to detect who's inside them.

They passed a nearby department store.

This looked familiar.

"Hey sis, didn't Sachiko work here before?" asked Sorami.

"Huh? What do you mean?" asked Uluru back.

Sorami touched the side of the building, and she activated her powers.

She saw the insides of the building. A local store where Sachiko used to work at. It looks like her usual hiding spots were being used in the building.

“Sachiko’s been here recently,” said Sorami.

“You know where she went?” asked Snow White.

“No. But I think I know why she came to W-City now,” said Sorami.

Sachiko had once been asked by Puk Puck to take a job at the Department Store, and she did, settling in W-City for a while.

Sorami had visited her in her work hours before, though it’s been a while since Sachiko even worked here again.

Sachiko may be a coward, but she’s smart. If she wants to escape, she makes sure she understands the lay of the land. She’ll only run away to places where she’s been to before, so that she’ll have a home field advantage.

“She’s in W-City because we always visited here when we were kids. Remember, sis?” asked Sorami.

“So you’re saying she’s backtracking?” asked Uluru.

“Yeah, probably. We should check her old haunts. Anywhere in particular? You’ve known her longer than I have,” said Sorami.

Uluru thought for a moment.

Then, her eyes lit up. She was confident in something, and instantly ran off somewhere.

“TAXI! TAXIII!”

Whenever Uluru was *this* confident in something, then there’s two things that might be happening.

One, she’s deluding herself, and is only confident to hide the fact that she has no plan.

Two, she actually knows what she’s doing, and is confident because she knows the right steps on how to do it.

When it’s the former, things go bad.

When it’s the latter, things always go according to plan.

Sorami just hoped it was the latter.

The Magical Girls took a taxi cab. Normally it would be a strange thing for Magical Girls to take a car, because it's actually slower than an actual Magical Girl speed, but Uluru had told them that it's safer with a taxi cab, because the Osk faction wouldn't know they're there.

"So where are we headed, sis?" asked Sorami.

"Monkey Mountain Amusement Park!" said Uluru.

"I've heard of that. It's shut down though, abandoned for a long time," said Snow White.

"Yeah, all the more reason Sachiko could be hiding there," said Uluru.

Monkey Mountain. It's W-City's most famous tourist spot. The fact that it's shut down should tell you what kind of economic state W-City is in right now.

10 years ago, when they were a lot younger, Monkey Mountain was rather famous, at least in W-City. Many people would flock to it and play there.

The mascot was a monkey train conductor, riding a train across a gigantic mountain.

Puk Puck would take them there on vacations, and sometimes just to have fun as well. Although it felt kind of strange to have a kindergartner-looking Magical Girl escorting what looked to be older girls, nobody seemed to mind afterwards.

Sorami was about 6 years old back then, Sachiko was about 7, and Uluru was 8 years old.

Sachiko *loved* the amusement park. She'd always try to go to the athletic games. Indeed, she might not look like it, but she loved those activities.

Then she saw the monkey.

The gigantic monkey suit, with that evil innocent-looking grin, with those gigantic wide eyes that stared into your soul.

Seeing something like that moving around, waving at people, and approaching you with exaggerated motions was a sure recipe for fear.

When Sachiko saw the monkey, she instantly cried out loud, as tears streamed down her poor face.

Puk Puck immediately tried to calm her down.

“Hey hey! What’s wrong, Sachiko? You okay?” asked Puk Puck.

“Waaaaaaah!!!”

People were staring at them, and Puk Puck laughed nervously.

“Calm down, alright. Oh, I have an idea! Stay here, okay? I’ll be right back!” said Puk Puck, instantly dashing off somewhere.

She came back later on, with three soft ice creams.

“ *Sniff* ... H-Huh? F-For me?” asked Sachiko.

“Yep! Hopefully this cheers you up! Soft cream ice cream! I wanted to buy it for you cause you seemed so down, but I ended up buying three of them to share with your sisters!” said Puk Puck.

Sachiko wiped the tears away, and she smiled with happiness.

Puk Puck gave her a hug,

“If anything’s scaring you, just talk to me, okay? Puk Puck will make it all better! Promise!”

A year later, Sachiko wasn’t scared of the monkey anymore. Soft cream ice cream became her favorite snack whenever she visited this amusement park.

They took pictures all the time, and every year they visited the park, Sorami would pose along with her three sisters for a good photo to remember the memories by.

Sometimes Sorami wishes that she knew Sachiko longer. She was always the one to settle her fears at home, despite being the younger sister.

Sorami herself was rather lazy, preferring to take things slow, compared to Uluru, who was always hard working to a fault, trying to prove herself.

Sorami was compatible with Sachiko, who just needed someone to understand how to properly talk to her.

Sorami was also compatible with Uluru, who just needed somebody who could mellow her a bit, while also appreciate her hard work.

Thus, Sorami has always been the glue of the family, mediating them together.

They've been together for so long, about 10 years now. They used to only hang out during their visits to the amusement park, but ever since it was closed, they bonded in other ways.

Yeah, there were fights and whatnot, but that's what being sisters are like. Besides, Puk Puck always knew how to calm one of them down.

But really, the amusement park was their real hideout spot in W-City, a trip down memory lane, if you will.

Yeah, it would make the most sense for Sachiko to hide off here.

This place has so many hiding spots, it's quite obvious that anyone would try to hide here. Especially if it was abandoned.

Sorami remembered the one time Sachiko was asked to ride a roller coaster in the park. She was a bit too afraid, and when she was scared, she started asking questions to Uluru.

"S-Sis, what's that?" asked Sachiko, pointing at a restaurant.

"That's where people go to eat when they get tired," said Uluru.

"And... What's that house?" asked Sachiko.

"That's the monkey's house. They go there when they wanna be alone."

"Alone?"

“Yeah, they go there at the end of the day,” said Uluru.

Maybe Sachiko’s using one of those monkey houses. They were employee-only rooms, access to changing rooms and whatnot, that visitors couldn’t enter.

Now that it’s abandoned, who knows.

Either way, they were already here.

## ☆ **Uluru**

Monkey Mountain Amusement Park.

Memories flooded Uluru’s mind when she went in here again.

The rides have broken down, and parts of the Amusement Park have been dismantled. There was a large sign saying ‘OUT OF ORDER’ and ‘DO NOT ENTER’.

The welcome sign picture with the monkey on it was missing some parts.

There are signs of rust, and clearly nobody’s been in here for years. The city can’t spend enough resources to actually get rid of this place, either.

It truly was abandoned.

A perfect hiding spot for Sachiko.

The three Magical Girls went inside the park.

When they stepped inside, Uluru saw some abandoned tents and sleeping bags. Ah, these belong to ruin explorers.

Uluru never understood those people. Glorified dumpster divers is what they are. What’s so fun about visiting an abandoned location? What are you even going to find? Trash?

It makes sense if they were ancient ruins, but this is hardly even 10 years old.



Anyways, they moved on.

Uluru had forgotten how big this place was. It was practically a miniature city. Not having been here for a while, Uluru didn't remember the layout that well.

There were certainly landmarks like Monkey Mountain itself, and of course the variety of buildings and funhouses that littered the park.

Snow White's phone started beeping.

"There's a Magical Girl in here, Pon! I'm detecting one somewhere in the center of the park, Pon!"

"Is that Sachiko, sis?" asked Sorami.

"Don't get your hopes up until I make sure," said Snow White.

The three of them got close to the center. Uluru remembered what the center was filled with. A roller coaster ride, now abandoned.

This was the same place Sachiko asked about that one building where the employees changed clothes.

This is as good a place as any to hide, too.

Snow White perked up.

"Someone's here," said Snow White.

"In the building, Pon!" said Fal.

"Her mind's in distress. She doesn't want to be found," said Snow White again.

Sorami looked at the building, concentrating hard. "I think sis is there!" said Sorami as she pointed towards the building.

"Sachikoooo! Come ouuut!" yelled Uluru as she came closer to the building.

She slammed the door open, and a small yelp came from the corner of the room. Uluru swore she could see a figure dive behind the desk.

“Alright Sachiko, come out. Don’t make me have to make you come out,” said Uluru.

No response.

“Gonna give you to the count of three... One... Twoooo....”

“Wait up, sis! Let’s not scare her,” said Sorami, suddenly appearing behind Uluru. Her face was still that of a calm and happy sister.

“Sachiko, we’ve been looking all over for you! Where’ve you been? Come out now, we’re not mad! Honest!” said Sorami happily.

Again, no response.

This time Snow White’s made her way inside the building too, and the three Magical Girls are just standing at the doorway.

Uluru was impatient.

She took a deep breath and cleared her throat.

“Alright, Sachiko... I did warn you... Sachiko! You can’t escape from here and are going to get caught soon, unless you show yourself now!” shouted Uluru.

A crash from behind the desk, and a girl crawling from it, slowly standing up.

The Magical Girl had blonde swirling hair, and 4-leaf clover eyes.

That blonde hair was near-identical to Puk Puck, only shorter. When Uluru was younger, Uluru was so jealous of that hair.

But now there were far more important things.

Premium Sachiko had shown herself, and there were signs of tears streaming down her face.

“A-Are you mad at me...?” asked Sachiko.

“Of course not!” said Sorami.

“We’re not mad, but we’re *worried* , you *dolt* ! Where’ve you been! You realize Lady Puck’s been worried sick about you!” said Uluru as she

approached Sachiko.

“Now sis... let’s not be rash,” said Sorami.

“Not now, Sorami. *Sachiko* ! You idiot! Is something wrong with your head or something? I should bonk you in over so you’d have more sense! Do you realize how much *danger* you’ve put yourself in?” said Uluru.

“I-I’m sorry, I just...”

“Just *what* ? Leaving without telling! Driving us on a wild goose chase, you realize the Osk faction’s also coming for you, right? You could’ve been *killed* !”

“I...”

“Sis, we found Sachiko, now! We should be good, okay?” said Sorami.

Uluru took a deep sigh.

Sachiko nervously sat down on the floor.



“Listen, you and me, we’re gonna have a long talk once we get back to Puk’s manor. I’m calling her right now,” said Uluru as she grabbed her Magical Phone.

As she began dialing the number, Sachiko said something.

“...I’m not going back.”

Uluru looked at her.

“What?”

“I... I don’t want to go back.”

“Huh? But why? Puk Puck’s a nice person! Why won’t you go back?” asked Uluru.

“I know she’s been good to me, but I can’t... I don’t want to...” said Sachiko.

“You are seriously *not* saying this right now. After all the trouble we went to find you, you can’t just refuse to go back. Why not?” asked Uluru, her face already beginning to redden with fury.

“If... If I tell you, you’re going to be angry at me,” said Sachiko.

“I’m already pretty pissed right now, Sachiko. We can’t just *leave* you here, either.”

“PON!”

“AAH!” yelped Sachiko.

“I’m detecting a large amount of Magical Girls surrounding the park, Pon!”

Sachiko nearly began to run away again, but Sorami immediately caught her by the scruff of her collar and held her with them.

“Oh no. Shufflins. Okay, we have no time,” said Snow White as she began to unzip her bag.

She opened it wide and aimed it towards Sachiko.

“W-What’s that?” asked Sachiko.

“No time to explain. This is the safest way. Sachiko, get in the bag,” said Snow White.

“Sorry, sis!” said Sorami as she pushed Sachiko inside Snow White’s bag, Sachiko yelping as she’s pushed in.

Snow White zipped the bag.

“On the count of three, we run, okay? Follow my lead, I’ll do my best to protect you,” said Snow White.

The two sisters nodded, and all three of them prepared to leave.

### ☆ **CQ Angel Hammer**

Hammer was looking through her telescope. High-powered, long range, designed by the Diamonds Shufflins.

She was far from the park, but she easily had a birds-eye view of everything.

Thanks to the efforts of the Clubs Shufflin, she was able to monitor Puk’s group from a safe distance, and now she knows that they have Sachiko.

The Clubs were in danger if they stayed, however.

“B Team, pull back and regroup with E Team. Set up on the rooftops surrounding the path. I want Hearts on South, East, and North entrances. Let’s funnel them out,” said Hammer.

Puk’s team began running.

Snow White, the Magical Girl Hunter, with some kind of mind reading ability, or so she’s heard.

The popgun girl, who can tell people what to do.

And then there’s another Magical Girl, who Hammer didn’t really know of. Based on Puk’s selection, most of them have detection magic, so maybe she doesn’t have offensive powers.

Either way, there was only three of them? Where’s Sachiko?

Hammer noticed Snow White's bag. Some kind of Magical Item? It looked like it. Perhaps they stored Sachiko in there somewhere, as protection.

Hammer didn't like violence. It wasn't her style. She was the strategist, more prone to analysis and planning.

She can always see the bigger picture, but she also knows that sometimes violence is necessary.

"Targets are running westwards, clump the Shufflin together, it seems Snow White's actively avoiding large groups. Have the Hearts and Diamonds surround areas we don't want them to go, lead them to the Spades. Clubs, Teams A through E, I want you set up on the rooftops surrounding them. Switch from tasers to clay guns," said Hammer towards her magical radio mic.

There was one thing that Grim Heart never understood about Shufflins.

They were far more capable than Grim Heart gave them credit for.

Shufflin's weakness was that no individual card could relay information to another card. It also relied on a hivemind-like personality. The new Shufflins were far more individualistic, at the cost of having no Joker.

Hammer would also cover for the fact that Shufflins can't intercommunicate.

Hammer was playing this like a strategy game, with a birds-eye view, she could see everything that transpired, and coordinated the Shufflins to work towards a common goal.

Grim Heart also thought the Hearts and Diamonds Shufflin useless. Not true.

Hearts Shufflin were great as bolsters to ranks, as they were sturdy, and could easily be good scouts, next to the Clubs.

The Diamonds are used for their intelligence. With the Diamonds, Hammer had them make a variety of equipment before they went on this mission.

Several taser guns for close quarter combat, and clay guns as well, shooting non-lethal magical clay, which sticks their opponent until removed. They're not trying to kill Sachiko, after all.

Another thing the Diamonds made is the plate armor that all Shufflins are wearing underneath their tabard. It should provide even Diamonds with ample protection if necessary.

This is what Grim Heart failed to do.

Snow White's approaching the firing squad.

The theory of the killbox is simple. Lure your opponents into a situation where they'll be set upon by all sides.

"On my count, Team A and C begin firing your clay guns. Aim for Snow White's group. Team B, D, and E, block their exits. Aim shots at the alleyways, make sure they can't run. Do not engage Snow White in melee unless you're covered by Ace of Spades," said Hammer.

Wait for it...

Wait for it...

Now!

"Now!"

Clubs Shufflin began shooting clay guns at Snow White, but Snow White seemed to have a sixth sense, dodging the clay bullets.

The two other Magical Girls tried to follow Snow White, as she began frantically running, trying to find a path to escape.

Every alleyway that Snow White turned to was blocked by clay shots.

The popgun girl screamed something that Hammer couldn't hear. Whatever it was, it wouldn't work. The Shufflins are wearing earplugs. Since Hammer's instructions are telepathic, they don't need a sense of hearing, as Hammer is their eyes and ears.

Snow White's team ran off again, not being able to backtrack now that the path has been booby trapped with magic clay.



They're leading them to the West entrance. There, the Spade battallion should be waiting for them.

The plan is perfect so far.

When Snow White's group came face to face with the Spade battallion, Snow White's eyes seemed to widen with shock.

She got the other two to stay behind her.

"Engage her 3-on-1. Have the Ace attack only when she's weakened. Don't take any chances. I want supporting fire. Block all exits," said Hammer.

The Club shooters moved rooftops and began shooting at Snow White. Snow White dodged the shots, but was then kicked by a Spade, before being injured with a slice from their spear.

Precognition can't help you when there's too many things going on.

Snow White blocked the attacks with her halberd, trying her best to keep up, but the barrage of fire plus the constant attacks were wearing her down.

"Focus on Snow White. Her bag probably has Sachiko. The other two can't seem to fight," said Hammer.

She almost has her, just a few more and this should be in the bag, literally.

Then she heard something behind her.

She turned around, only to see a black creature swoop towards her. Wait, how did something like that get loose here?

A Homunculus, or more commonly known as a Demon, had come rushing ahead of Hammer.

How'd they figure out their location?

Did they plan this the whole time?

Was Snow White a distraction to find Hammer?

Are these enemy reinforcements?

...Did they seriously ambush Hammer?

Before Hammer could think more, the demon was flying too close for comfort.

Hammer twisted her body to avoid it, but its wing knocked her inside a building, where she was standing before.

Hammer crashed inside the building, the force of the collision crashed her through the roof.

Her head rang, she groggily looked upwards to the sky.

Six Diamonds, well, they're really just wings, rectangular sheets of wings, but they're demons nonetheless, were swooping down to Hammer, probably to finish her off.

Hammer was laying in the floor. Every second that Hammer spends wasting on this floor means more Shufflins will lose their command structure, more Shufflins will lose their lives, Hammer can't let that happen.

Hammer had to make this quick.

She couldn't fight as well as other Magical Girls, but you don't need to fight your enemy to win.

Hammer turned on her radio microphone, and adjusted the volume to high. She aimed at the demons, and she blew on the mic as loudly as possible.

The demons instantly crashed, as the sound of a ringing microphone in your head at max volume isn't a pretty sound.

Hammer hit the mic to the wall, banging it as loudly as possible as the demons twitched on the floor motionlessly.

Finally, satisfied that she's safe, she flew upwards, back to her original position.

She looked at her binoculars. Where was Snow White?

She got past the barricade, in place of the Puk team were demons fighting with Shufflin. Some Shufflin were trapped in the clay, as well as some demons.

Team Puk escaped in all the chaos. Damn it!

Hammer looked to the left. A demon was carrying a Magical Girl. The Magical Girl had a white dress, and blue hair.

The demon swooped in, and dropped the Magical Girl on the roof, as she landed swiftly. She took out a trident, and began cutting through rooftop Shufflins.

*Shit*, she's cutting through the Diamonds and Hearts.

"Shufflins, retreat is top priority, repeat, retreat is top priority! Hearts, block any enemy pursuit. Protect the Diamonds! Do not sacrifice yourself!"

This was a perfect plan, where did the demons come from? No intelligence suggested any reinforcements at all. It's like they were a sudden third party.

Retreat for now...

### ☆ **Sorami Nakano**

Sorami was confused. Very confused.

They had been escaping the Shufflins left and right, but it seemed like the Shufflins seemed to have some kind of precognition.

They knew exactly where they were going.

Uluru couldn't use her magic, because the Shufflins seemed to be plugging their ears. Snow White and Uluru both tried their best to protect Sorami as they ran away, but they were being overwhelmed.

Had it not been for the demons arriving, they probably would've lost.

The demons sliced the Shufflins in half, and ruined their entire army-like columns.

One of the Shufflin bodies had been stuck in the clay trap that they fired beforehand.

“Now’s our chance! Come on!” said Snow White, as the three of them used the Shufflin body stuck in the clay as a stepping stone.

Finally out of the trap, Snow White led Uluru and Sorami across the park, retreating to the Eastern entrance instead of the Western one they originally planned for, as there were far too many Spades Shufflin waiting there.

Were these demons friendly?

Sorami couldn’t think straight. Her body was stressed and tired. Snow White and Uluru were running and jumping across fences, while Sorami was struggling to keep up with them.

Sorami remembered her days in Puck manor, when Uluru and Sachiko were in the front yard, exercising.

Even Sachiko enjoyed athletic activities, but Sorami was more of the ‘take it easy’ kind of girl.

Sorami was always bored during those times, “Why can’t we take some breaks?” is what she always said, getting too tired and lazy to do it. She wasn’t captain of the guard anyways, she wouldn’t need to train anyway.

Now she understood.

Now she knew why her older sisters had been training every day to keep their bodies in shape.

Uluru had no problem following Snow White, but Sorami was struggling.

“Sorami! Come on!” said Uluru.

“Yeah... I’m coming!”

Snow White suddenly stopped, looked back, and pushed Uluru backwards, before a gigantic demon rammed into her, sending her flying across towards the building.

“ULURU! SORAMI! RUN!” yelled Snow White, as the gigantic demon began fighting with her.

Uluru grabbed Sorami’s hand, and she dragged her across to safety.

“Will Snow White be okay!?” asked Sorami.

“She’ll be fine! Stick with me, okay? I’ve got your back!” said Uluru, as they dodged hordes of demons fighting retreating Shufflins.

They went to an alleyway area, a shortcut, but maze-like.

*Remember your training.*

*Remember your training.*

*Remember your training.*

They heard a shrill shriek, and saw a demon swooping down towards them. Instinctively, Uluru moved Sorami behind her, as she was prepared to block the demon herself.

Before the demon arrived however, in a flash, Snow White appeared in front of them, jumped towards the demon, and using her halberd, sliced it in half.

Snow White was tired, beaten up, and bloody. She looked at the two sisters,

“...You two okay?” asked Snow White.

“Yeah. Yeah, how’d you find us?” asked Uluru.

“Fal, and my magic, remember? Come on, we have to keep moving, while the chaos is fresh,” said Snow White.

The three of them moved across the alley.

Suddenly Snow White’s Magical Phoe began beeping once more.

“Two Magical Girls, Pon! Closeby!”

“Shufflin?” asked Uluru.

Snow White shook her head, “Not Shufflin. Their minds are different. I don’t know who they are. Stay behind me, okay?”

They turned around the corner, and they saw two Magical Girls.

One clad in a black dress, and one that looked like a scholar of some kind.

For some reason, Sorami seemed to know the black dress one, but couldn't place her name at all.

Uluru gripped Sorami's hand, instinctively trying to protect her.

Snow White stepped forward.

"Step off," threatened Snow White with her halberd.

"Hand over Premium Sachiko first and we'll gladly do it," said the scholar.

"Not going to happen," said Snow White.

The black Magical moved her hands together, and made a shape with her palms. On the wall, was projected the crude shape of a dog shadow, made with the black girl's hands.

The dog shadow barked.

*What ?*

The dog shadow moved across the walls, towards the ground, and instantly took a bite at Uluru's legs.

"GYAH!"

It was a shadow, but it still attacked, and blood still came out of Uluru's legs.

Uluru fell on her knees. Snow White's eyes widened with rage, and she instantly charged towards the dark Magical Girl.

The dark Magical Girl made another shadow beast with her left arm, and pointed it towards Snow White.

Snow White jumped off the ground. She'd be safe if she weren't touching it, as the shadows could only move in the 2D plane, but she can't jump forever.

Snow White swung her halberd at the dark Magical Girl, but the dark Magical Girl didn't even flinch, and caught it with both her hands. With Snow White's movements trapped, the dark Magical Girl knelt her in the stomach, and began beating on Snow White.

Snow White glanced at the ground, saw the shadows coming towards her. She fought back with the black Magical Girl, retained possession of her halberd, and jumped away.

This was how Snow White was forced to fight. Jumping and striking. This wasn't ideal at all for her.

"Sorami! Run!" said Uluru as she tried to stand up, dodging the shadows.

"Mi-Chan," said the dark Magical Girl, still fighting with Snow White.

"Roger that," said the scholar. She pulled out what seemed like a newspaper, rolled up into her hands.

She started running towards Sorami.

Was the scholar seriously trying to attack Sorami with a newspaper? What was her plan? Sorami was scared, and nervous.

She's never been the type to show that she's scared. She always displays a happy and comfy aura to those around her, that's just the kind of girl she was.

But she also knew that whatever this scholar's doing, she's serious.

Then the scholar shouted,

*" Trades -> Blades! "*

The newspaper turned into a longsword. Sorami widened her eyes. Instinctively, she fell backwards, dodging the swing that the scholar swung at her.

Sorami only had one thought in her mind as the scholar continued her attack.

*Run!*

## ☆ **Princess Deluge**

The plan was simple.

Get in, find out where Sachiko was, grab her, get out.

An army of flying demons should be able to handle that, plus a few demons on the ground for good measure.

Demons, or Disruptors as Deluge once knew them, were apparently a creation of the Land of Magic. Either way, she has control of them now, more advanced versions of them.

Her mind was focused on retrieving Sachiko. However, what she saw changed her mind completely.

On the rooftops, on the streets.

Shufflins.

Her mind changed from concentration to pure anger. Who gives a damn about Premium Sachiko? Shufflin should've been gone, but they're not.

If they're not gone, that means everyone at the facility...

...They all died for nothing.

Deluge was going to fix that.

She took out two pills. These are the medicines that the Pure Elements had to use to maintain their strength.

Research and Development had these on hand as well, as they were researching Man-Made Magical Girls.

She swallowed two of them, and ordered the demon carrying her to drop her on the roof.

She landed, and as she fell off, she shouted with all her strength.

“Luxury Mode! On!”

The jewel on her tiara glowed brightly, and ice particles began to encircle her as she began falling, landing with a roll on the roof, equipping



her trident, and instantly going for the Shufflins at the rooftop.

Diamonds Shufflins. Weak.

She stabbed one of the Diamonds, but realized that for some reason, her spear wasn't cutting through.

Plate armor? The Shufflins had plate armor now?

Doesn't matter.

Deluge pushed harder, as the Diamonds Shufflin only had fear in their eyes.

The rest were panicking and running away as well.

Deluge put strength in her thrust, as it pierced through the Diamond's armor completely. Then, once Deluge was sure that it was inside of her body, she began freezing the Diamond from the inside.

Her internal organs should be freezing completely now.

The Diamonds eyes bulged, her tears instantly froze to ice, and blood was leaking out of her eyes and mouth.

All Deluge could see in that Shufflin's eyes were fear and horror, but Deluge won't stop. Not this time.

Finally, that Diamond died, her mouth hanging open as her face was in pain.

Deluge removed the trident, and some Clubs Shufflin behind her were trying to escape. She took aim.

She shot an ice shard that pierced a Club's throat.

She saw another Clubs, desperately trying to escape. With Luxury Mode, Deluge had increased speed, so she tackled the club downwards to the ground, and when they were finally crashed together, she pierced the trident straight into the Club's right eye.

As the Club screamed, Deluge silenced her by stomping on the Club's neck, until she felt the crack of her bones vibrating across her feet.

A group of Shufflins were trying to run away.

Deluge won't let them escape. She ran towards the horde of Shufflins, disorienting them as they tried to fight her, but then...

...Something deflected her spear.

Another spear. The spear was shaped like a spade. Deluge looked above her, and she realized who was wielding it.

Ace of Spades.

When Deluge first saw her back then, all she felt was fear. Now, she felt a mixture of anger and joy.

Anger because of what the Ace of Spades represented for her.

Joy because now she gets to deal back all the damage that Ace had done to her that time, long ago.

Deluge stepped backwards, launching icicles at the Ace of Spades.

Ace blocked all of it, deflecting each icicle as fast as she could. Deluge charged in, and the Ace only deflected each trident stab with her spears.

When Deluge made mistakes, the Ace would reach in, slicing her, stabbing her, hitting her with the shaft of the spade spear.

But Deluge noticed something off.

The Ace wasn't capitalizing. She wasn't playing on the offense like she did last time. Instead, she was playing on the defensive. Not making any unnecessary movements at all.

Why?

Why was she doing this?

Then Deluge realized something. The Ace of Spades was ushering in the other Shufflin to run. The Ace of Spades was protecting them.

Protecting them?

*You're protecting your friends?*

*...How dare you...*

The Ace of Spades was protecting her allies.

Just like how Quake protected Tempest.

Just like how Inferno protected Deluge.

Just like how Cherry protected them all.

Just like how Filuru protected Deluge.

Quake comforted Tempest, was then decapitated, and then Tempest came afterwards as well. Deluge had seen it. It was recorded. She played it back over and over, realizing the futility of it.

Deluge's friends all tried to protect each other, but it was meaningless. Many of them died.

Many of them died for no reason.

All of them due to Shufflin.

And this Shufflin. This Ace of Spades. Does she really think she has the right to protect *her* friends, when she's caused so much suffering for Deluge's friends?

Deluge took out more pills, and swallowed them.

"I'm going to kill every last one of you..."

She took a deep breath

“Luxury Mode! BURST!”

Brighter than before. More powerful than before. Deluge’s crystal was shining once more, and Deluge felt more power than she had, but her body was also in pain.

She was straining herself, but she didn’t care.

She ignored the Ace of Spades, and went straight for the escaping Shufflin, slicing their heads off, killing as much as she can get her hands on.

The Ace of Spades tackled her away from the Shufflins.

Deluge stabbed the Ace, but Ace blocked it with her hand. Ace of Spades was trying her hardest to move the fight away from the retreating Shufflin.

Locked in combat, and energy beginning to fail, Deluge began to resort to punching the Ace of Spades.

The Ace retaliated by kicking Deluge’s shin, and Deluge heard a crack in her bones, as she fell to one knee.

The Ace was about to escape.

*No!*

Deluge shot icicles at her, preventing her from focusing on running.

*You’re not coming out of this one alive .*

Luxury Mode’s running out.

Deluge took a deep breath, held the trident in her right arm, supporting it with her left arm, like how you would hold a sniper rifle.

Then, she charged towards the Ace, trident thrust at the ready.

The Ace saw it coming, and grabbed the prongs of the trident, holding fast, as the vibrations shook Deluge’s body.

Deluge was on her knees, the Ace was struggling to prevent Deluge from thrusting the trident.

Locked together...

...Now is her chance.

Deluge released her right hand from the trident, and grabbed something she's been storing for a while.

On her waist, handcuffs.

She locked them towards Ace's legs, clamping them shut.

The Ace's eyes widened, she gasped, and suddenly, the Ace lost all her strength, allowing Deluge to pierce through her chest.

Deluge removed the trident, her gem finally giving out.

Luxury Mode was over.

The Ace fell down.

These handcuffs were obtained from Armor Arlie when she was on the ground in the streets. Deluge had found a key on Patricia, which she used to unlock the handcuffs.

Apparently, they also prevent movement unless forced upon, and the only way to open them was with that key.

Now, Ace of Spades was immobile, on the ground, her eyes were filled with fear.

Deluge used all her power to get up, using her trident as support. She looked down at the Ace, enraged at what she had done a long time ago.

Now... Now she was at her mercy.

Deluge pierced the trident to the Ace's throat. The Ace gagged for blood. Deluge launched icicles down the Ace's throat as well, each icicle causing the Ace to spasm.

Deluge didn't care.

She's going to pay for killing her friends.

Deluge's strength was waning.

She didn't accomplish her objective.

But she killed the Ace of Spades. That was more than anyone ever did before.

Before, she needed the help of so many people. Filuru, Styler Mimi, Marika Fukuroi, Snow White, Inferno...

The survivors... Were there any? Deluge was the only one that got out of there...

She's going to avenge all of them.

"Deluge! Deluuuge!"

Deluge heard a familiar voice.

Blue Bell?

So many things floated in her mind when she saw Blue Bell's form. Her eyes were already groggy, and her vision was blurry.

*What are you doing here?*

*Don't come closer, it's dangerous.*

*Save yourself, Blue Bell!*

Deluge couldn't speak. She lost her strength. She couldn't even grip her trident. She fell down, tired from all the fighting.



### ☆ **Blue Bell Candy**

Blue Bell had been running in utter chaos.

There were clay bullets being fired around, demons were flying and engaging the card soldiers. Blue Bell had done her best to avoid them all.

A barrage of clay shots were being fired at the demons. Blue Bell dived under towards an alleyway.

A demon group was flying through. Blue Bell dodged them and jumped up towards an abandoned merry-go-round.

Clubs cards saw Blue Bell, trying to hit her with their maces.

Blue Bell jumped back, running away, dodging the spears and mace fighting that was going on.

There was only one thing on her mind.

*Where's Deluge?*

"Deluge!!! Deluuuge!"

Her safety was important. Blue Bell had to find her. Where was she? Where would she go? Blue Bell had to find her.

The most logical place for someone to start searching would be at the center, so Blue Bell made her way there.

That's when she saw her on the ground.

A card soldier, twitching, eyes wide open, lying on the ground, blood leaking out her throat. Cuffed in the legs.

Next to her, Deluge, barely conscious.

"Deluge! Deluge!"

Blue Bell approached Deluge, she hugged her. She was worried. Was Deluge dead? Please be okay.

Blue Bell felt Deluge's breathing. It was heavy and pained.

*Deluge... did you overexert yourself?*

Demon wings were circling Blue Bell and Deluge. Deluge saw them. These demons, Deluge was the one that took them, right?

They should be loyal to Deluge.

"If you understand me! Deluge is hurt! Protect Deluge, don't let anyone get to her!" said Blue Bell, as the demon wings spread out, scouting the



area, ensuring Deluge was safe.

*Please, Deluge... Please be safe...*

## ☆ **Sorami Nakano**

Sorami dodged the sword.

The next swing was predicted. She grabbed the scholar's elbow.

*Now what?*

Her breathing was tense. This fight was fast. She had already escaped the alleyways, but the scholar was pursuing her.

The scholar got down on one knee, and grabbed some sand on the ground.

She looked at Sorami, her left empty hand clumped with the sand.

*"Dirt -> Dirk!"*

Suddenly, her left hand now had a knife.

Sorami instinctively released the scholar's elbow and jumped backwards, as the scholar thrust her left arm for a stab, missing Sorami.

*Remember your training.*

Sorami turned back, she ran as fast as she could. Find exit spots. Find a way to escape. Where to go?

The restaurant?

The merry-go-round?

The toilets?

The funhouse?

The resting area?

The warehouse?

Too many places. Not enough time to think. Control your breathing. Just like in training.

Sorami then noticed footsteps behind her. The scholar. As long as Sorami keeps her distance, she should be safe from the reach of the sword.

The scholar swung her sword, but she was out of her range. What was going on?

*“ Longsword -> Long Board! ”*

The sword suddenly transformed into a large wooden plank, longer reach. Too fast to react. The scholar swung, and smacked Sorami in the chest, sending her flying off with her strength.

Sorami rolled off, coughing blood.

She landed near a storehouse. She stood up, using the wall of the storehouse for support. The scholar was still running after her.

Sorami crashed inside through the window, and she dived under one of the desks. Taking a moment to breathe.

Why was it so hard to breathe?

Sorami grabbed her chest. She saw the reason why. Her chest bones were broken.

*I'm scared.*

*Oh god... I'm so scared...*

*Uluru... where are you?*

*...Sachiko...*

*...I'm so scared.*

*Someone save me...*

Sorami had never been in an actual fight before. She always had a cheerful exterior, mediating between her sisters.

She always loved being near them, Puk Puck brought them together, after all.

But she can't be scared now.

She has to be brave for her sisters' sake. She needs to pick herself up. Remember how training went.

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe out.*

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe out.*

She heard a creaking noise of the board. In the corner of her eye, in a dark shaded silhouette, was the figure of the scholar.

The scholar was looking around. It was like a horror movie.

Sorami kept her body low to the ground.

She crawled over, trying to get next to the window. She took care not to make any noise.

*Breathe in*

She moved behind a pillar. The darkness of the storehouse should hide their figures well.

*Breathe out*

She paused. The scholar moved to the back of the storehouse.

Sorami began crawling again.

Almost there...

Sorami was careful to keep her body close to the shadows as much as possible. However, there was one thing she didn't account for.

Her long twintailed hair.

The one that had colorful highlights on each end.

She felt intense pain on the right twintail. The scholar had stepped down on it. Sorami turned around, the scholar thrust downwards with the knife, but Sorami grabbed the scholar's hands, locking her in place.

Their strengths were even. This scholar was not a combatant, but she was still more fit than Sorami ever was. Still, a Magical Girl is nothing without her strength.

The scholar tried to push the knife downwards, while Sorami tried to prevent it from being pushed.

Until...

***CRASH!!!***

The wooden boards that the scholar's leg was supported on suddenly collapsed. This was an old building after all.

The scholar lost her balance and dropped the knife. Sorami grabbed the scholar's other leg, and pulled it. The scholar fell backwards.

Sorami instantly grabbed a nearby bucket, filled with some kind of white powder, and threw it on the scholar's face. Sorami had already held her breath in the meantime, so she didn't breathe in the powder.

The scholar coughed and gagged, and Sorami banged the bucket on the scholar's head, before slamming it to a nearby pillar.

The scholar groaned on the floor.

That's it...

...Now Sorami can get back to the group! She can escape!

...

...

...Wait.

If Sorami goes back to the group, then the scholar will join in the fight. Sorami wasn't a good enough fighter to handle this scholar herself.

It looked like Snow White and Uluru were having trouble with the dark Magical Girl too.

If Sorami brought her to them, then the scholar and the dark Magical Girl will team up, and Sachiko might be killed.

Snow White might be killed.

Uluru might be killed.

That's right.

Sorami understood why she ran as far away. Yes, she was scared, but it was also because she wanted to get the fight away.

She's going to have to keep fighting the scholar here, until she beats her.

She's at a disadvantage in skill, so she's going to have to manipulate the odds in her favor.

There was a reason why the floorboard broke when it did. There was a reason why there was a bucket of white powder.

Sorami moved there.

Sorami knew exactly where it was.

Sorami's Magical Skill,

*To know the contents of sealed things*

The storehouse was nearly sealed, save for the window, allowing light to pass through. When Sorami stood up after the board attack, she

grabbed the storehouse's walls, and immediately found all she needed to know.

All the information inside the storehouse was transmitted inside of her.

The area where the floorboards are weak.

A bucket full of powder.

Sorami crawled, because she wanted the scholar to step on her, thus breaking the floorboards. That would've given her enough to escape.

But now, now that she decided to stand her ground. She had to even the playing field to her advantage.

She grabbed some tape from the storehouse, knowing exactly where it was.

She found a cardboard box, ripped it apart, and taped the box to the broken windowpane, covering the hole and the light streaming through.

Now....

...Now the storehouse was *completely* sealed.

Sorami closed her eyes.

Now she knew everything in this storehouse. Information was transmitted into her in real time. Where everything is, the contents, how much grain of powder was in the air.

Sorami's Magical Skill also had a side effect.

The more sealed something is, the more information Sorami can gain. A completely sealed object is a treasure trove of information to Sorami.

She didn't even need to open her eyes. Just breathe.

She knew the scholar's breathing rhythm. She knew where the scholar was. The scholar stood up. The knife on her hand, made of iron, gripped tightly.

The scholar lunged at Sorami.

Muscle movements, the scholar's muscles were contracting in such a way that it was clear the direction she was aiming for.

Sorami effortlessly grabbed the scholar's arm.

The scholar tried to twist free. Her muscles were already prepared to do so, Sorami could see it in her mind's eye.

Now, to just twist the other direction.

The center of gravity was disturbed, Sorami had leverage, the scholar was thrown downwards to the floor.

Sorami kept hold of her hand.

The scholar tried to stand up, but again Sorami leveraged her strength, and the scholar's muscle movements to lift her up, flip her over her shoulders, and slam her across to the other side.

Sorami could see confusion and shock in the scholar's eyes. She was still holding fast to the knife.

The scholar tried to kick Sorami, but with her other arm, Sorami grabbed the leg of the scholar. One arm on the scholar's wrist, another on her leg.

Sorami lifted the scholar, and crashed her through the desk she was hiding at before.

"Ngh... *Cough*... Guh... *Huff* ..."

The scholar's breathing was heavy, and her heartrate is increasing by the second. The scholar was sweating, clearly trying to find a way out.

Sorami had to keep doing this, at least until the scholar was out of the picture.



### *Make your punches count*

Sorami had to make sure the scholar went under. She grasped the scholar's neck, and Sorami punched the scholar in the face multiple times. Each punch increased the heartrate of the scholar.

*Muscle movement!*

Sorami blocked the stab by the scholar, as the scholar spat out the blood she accumulated. She had to disable the scholar's knife hand.

Sorami grabbed hold of the scholar's wrist.

She could see her bone structure. Time to break it. Sorami pressured the scholar's wrist, twisting it in ways it shouldn't have been twisted.

She saw the bones cracking in her mind's eye.

*CRACK!*

*"GAAUH!! Cough!! COUGH!! "*

The scholar grit her teeth and let go of the knife. Sorami continued beating down on the scholar.

*Pass out!*

*Pass out!!!*

*PASS OUT!!!*

She continued punching and punching. She didn't want to kill her, she just needed her unconscious.

The scholar gritted her teeth, using her broken arm, she seemed to touch the knife on the ground, barely grabbing it.

*" Cough... Huff... Iron... Huff... Beacon! "*

Suddenly, the knife turned into a 80 cm diameter searchlight, pointed towards the window, sealed with cardboard.

The scholar grabbed a wooden splinter from the desk, and threw it towards the cardboard window, breaking the seal, and removing the cardboard.

It didn't matter.

Sorami has her on the ropes.

But what was her plan?

Why did she do that?

Then, Sorami heard a scream from outside the storehouse. It was Snow White's.

"SORAMI! GET AWAY!"

A large earthquake seemed to shake the entire storehouse, releasing Sorami's grip on the scholar.

The scholar took the chance to escape Sorami and run out the window.

A sharp pain hit Sorami's right leg. The ceiling was falling, the ground was shaking. What's going on? What's happening?

The storehouse was falling apart.

Sorami had to run.

She wanted to move, but she just fell down afterwards. She wanted to stand up, but she couldn't support herself.

Why couldn't she move?

She looked at her legs.

Her right leg was missing.

The storehouse crumbled above her. The roof fell on top of her.

Sorami breathed.

It was hard to stand up. She was lying down on the ground, rubble all around her, dirt everywhere, leg bleeding.

She saw, in the distance, on the ground, a large shadow beast.

Shadow Beast...

...Ah

The scholar shone the light. Lights make shadows longer. The shadow beast must've destroyed the storehouse.

The shadow beast bit off Sorami's leg.

Now...

The shadow beast lunged towards Sorami's chest, as she was lying down on the ground.

Flesh teared and bone began to crack. Sorami could feel every inch of pain, as her eyes widened and she gritted her teeth.

The shadow beast burst out the other side, retreating away.

Was this it?

The pain was hard to bear, but Sorami smiled.

Maybe Uluru and Sachiko will be safe. Maybe now, if Sorami didn't slow them down, they'd be safe.

They wouldn't even need to be mediated anymore. She was sure, Uluru will find a way to reunite with Sachiko.

Uluru had already warmed up to Snow White too.

Yes...

...This is fine.

There was no hope left for Sorami's survival, but this is fine.

She believed in her sisters.

She believed in Snow White.

They'll make it.

Sorami slowly closed her eyes, and began to let go. The last thing she heard was Uluru's screaming and crying.

☆ **Monoshiri Mi-Chan**

One of Mi-Chan's arms were broken. The enemy was stronger than she thought. She wasn't expecting the battle with that girl to last that long.

Dark Cutie should be able to hold out long. She's a deadly fighter.

Mi-Chan had to go back and support her. Whatever happens, she can't lose anyone in her team, and they need to complete their objective.

Where the hell is Deluge?

She came in here gus blazing with demons and is nowhere to be found. Now her team is disoriented. Mi-Chan's trying to make the best of what they've got.

Her arm hurts. She grabbed it with her other arm.

Then she heard something.

Flying in the distance.

Heading straight for her.

She looked behind her, twirling in a weird shape, physically impossible, like it was adjusting its trajectory.

*A Shuriken ?*

With the arm that still worked, she prepared. The Shuriken's velocity was easy to estimate. She had to time this right.

As the Shuriken went towards Mi-Chan, she immediately caught it with her hand.

A Shuriken? But from where.

Then, in the distance, she saw more. More Shuriken, seemingly being fired from multiple directions.

All changing their trajectories to hit Mi-Chan.

Magical Girl's powers, perhaps?

*Wait, shit. I need to protect myself .*

She had to find something, fast. She looked across the ground. There, she saw the board that she hit that girl with.

The board. How long was it, how can you describe it, what were the synonyms, what's the material it was made of?

Think of a word...

...Got one!

She dived for the board, used her working hand to grip it, and then, as the Shuriken raced towards her, she curled her body downwards, aimed the board upwards, and...

“ *Cypress -> Aegis* ”

The board became a large shield, one that Mi-Chan used to block all of the shuriken flying at her.

Mi-Chan had an earpiece on her, one that she used to talk to Glassianne.

“Annie! There's a sniper somewhere throwing Shuriken! You see anyone?”

“Not that I can see. I don't know where they are,” replied Glassianne.

“How's our leader?”

“Dark Cutie's fighting the Magical Girl Hunter. She's doing well, but the other one's also not giving in.”

“Need to give support, thanks Annie.”

Mi-Chan made sure no Shuriken were heading her way, and she ran towards the direction of Dark Cutie.

She saw her in the distance.

Dark Cutie threw the Magical Girl Hunter towards a pillar. The Hunter seemed to be able to predict the shadows, as well as block Cutie's punches. The two were trading blows.

Mi-Chan grabbed a nearby rock, smashed it to tiny pieces.

“ *Pebble -> Rifle* ”

She groaned in pain as she used her left arm to support the rifle. She aimed clearly at the Hunter, keeping it as steady as possible, until...

“YOU!”

She heard a voice from behind her.

A Magical Girl in a black jacket. Holding a popgun aimed at Mi-Chan’s head. Her face was red and full of tears.

“You bitch...” said the girl.

Mi-Chan instantly aimed her rifle at the Magical Girl.

“YOU SHOOT ME! YOU DIE!” said the girl.

Mi-Chan’s eyes widened.

So this Magical Girl was prepared with a way to counter rifles. Mi-Chan needed to find some other way to beat her.

If shooting her killed Mi-Chan, this wouldn’t be ideal.

“IF YOU DON’T LEAVE, I’M GOING TO BLOW UP, AND THE EXPLOSION WILL KILL ALL OF YOU!” said the girl, angered and in tears.

Fear gripped Mi-Chan’s spine.

This girl was insane. Suicide bombing, just to kill Mi-Chan and Dark Cutie. Mi-Chan couldn’t risk that.

She hated being afraid.

She remembered when she was younger. She used to be so afraid of the dark. She had to comfort herself by telling her it’s okay, and that the dark won’t hurt her.

That’s why she always strived for knowledge, to conquer fear.

But this girl was just insane. Blowing up like that. Not worth it. Mi-Chan instantly ran away and left.

Dark Cutie needed to go too.

*Come on, leader, don’t do anything stupid !*

## ☆ **Snow White**

Snow White couldn't hear Sorami's voice.

No.

No, no, *no!*

Snow White focused her attacks, jumping now and then to avoid the shadow beasts on the ground.

Shadow Beasts didn't have a mind of their own, so Snow White had to rely on reading Dark Cutie's mind.

Yes.

Dark Cutie.

Snow White knew her. Not in real life. She was from one of the *Cutie Healer* Anime Snow White used to watch as a kid.

*Cutie Healer Galaxy* .

Dark Cutie was an antagonist there. Born from the depths of space, the dark matter that consumed all life, *Space Chaos* , birthed out Dark Cutie.

The protagonists, Cutie Altair and her partner, Cutie Vega, would always triumph over Dark Cutie's plans.

The ongoing sentiment each season was always, 'Will Dark Cutie die?', 'Will Dark Cutie be redeemed?' 'What will happen to Dark Cutie?'

But then, in the middle of the season, Dark Cutie was defeated, swore revenge, retreated, and never showed up in the Anime again.

It was very controversial at the time.

Of course, this was the real Dark Cutie. Snow White was fighting with the real version now, and she's much harder than what she remembered.

Dark Cutie dodged Snow White's blows effortlessly. Her arms were attempting to control her shadow beasts.

Snow White swung her halberd down. Dark Cutie grabbed the poles of the halberd. The two were locked together.

Snow White saw a building with two pillars. Using the weight as leverage, she threw away Dark Cutie's body towards the building, slamming her into the walls.

Snow White rushed towards Dark Cutie, halberd at the ready, again Dark Cutie was prepared, grabbing the halberd with one arm.

She made a scissors-like shadow with two fingers. With them, she used the shadow scissors to cut off the pillars holding the building's front rooftops together.

The rooftop began to collapse. Dark Cutie dived away to escape, Snow White also dived away as well, as she anticipated it too.

When the shadow beasts seemed to advance towards Snow White. They suddenly stopped, as Dark Cutie was distracted with something.

Snow White looked up to see what it was.

Dark Cutie was catching multiple Shuriken being thrown at her.

Shuriken!?

*...Ripple!?*

Snow White took her chance. No time to think about that. She charged towards Dark Cutie, managing to inflict wounds by slashing her with her halberd.

She followed up with a knee, a hit with her shaft.

No holding back. Dark Cutie is strong and dangerous, if Snow White has any chance of winning, she needs to give her no breathing room.

Cutie managed to block some of the attacks, but others passed through. Dark Cutie had been dodging and avoiding most of this time. Close Quarters Combat is something she wasn't prepared for.

A Kunai stabbed Dark Cutie in the shoulders.



She was being attacked on two sides. She could block Snow White's onslaught, or the rain of Kunai and Shuriken.

She took out the Kunai on her shoulder, slashed Snow White's cheeks with it, then kicked her away, diving away to avoid the Shuriken.

But the Shuriken and Kunai followed her trajectory.

That was Ripple's magic. No doubt about it.

Dark Cutie dodged the Shuriken and Kunai, catching them. She gauged the situation, and Snow White read her mind.

*Can't fight like this*

*Too many things going on*

*Need to escape*

Then Snow White heard the voice of another Magical Girl.

“IF YOU DON’T LEAVE, I’M GOING TO BLOW UP, AND THE EXPLOSION WILL KILL ALL OF YOU!”

For a second, Snow White was afraid. Did she have to leave too? But then...

*Don’t notice the lie. Just leave, dammit!*

Snow White realized the lie. It was Uluru’s magic, and she stood her ground, as Dark Cutie looked back at Uluru.

Dark Cutie immediately dashed out of view, retreating from the battle.

Snow White, tired, beaten, and bloody, saw the Kunai that Dark Cutie used to slash her, lying down on the ground.

She picked it up, and stored it in her pocket.

She looked at Uluru, who was holding back her tears as she fell to her knees besides Sorami.

She couldn’t hear Sorami’s voice. The last time she heard her voice was in the storehouse. Which means...

...Oh no...

Sorami...

Snow White saw the body on the street, dragged out.

Sorami’s gone.

Somewhere where no one from above could see them.

Under the bridge. Under the heavy rain.

Snow White was holding the Kunai in her hand. She was still twirling it around. The design was similar to Ripple’s.

Even though she had no idea if Ripple was even alive, this had to be hers.

Which means Ripple was there.

Premium Sachiko was crying in the corner. Uluru was curling up, her face red and angry. She'd already spent all her tears away back at the park.

Snow White stored the Kunai back in her pocket.

"Uluru. Contact Puk Puck. Tell her we have Premium Sachiko. We're going back," said Snow White.

Uluru nodded. She took out her Magical Phone and began texting.

"I don't want to..." said Sachiko in the distance.

Snow White and Uluru looked up.

"I'm not going back..." said Sachiko again.

Uluru stood up. "You're still saying that? After all that's happened? You're still saying that!?"

Snow White stood between Uluru and Sachiko, but Uluru pushed her away and grabbed Sachiko's collar.

Uluru was shorter than Sachiko, but she was still the older sister.

"Look... Look at what's happened!" said Uluru, tears flowing again.

"U-Uluru, I'm..." whimpered Sachiko.

"Do you even *realize* what you did!? Do you even know what running away caused? Huh!? *Huh* !?"

"Not so loud," said Snow White.

"Why the hell did you run away, Sachiko? Why did you go, huh!? Puk Puck never would've killed you! You would've been safe! Instead, you ran away and now... Now you're still saying you won't come back!?" said Uluru, as Sachiko began whimpering.

"Uluru, calm down," said Snow White.

“Don’t *tell* me to calm down! LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID, SACHIKO! BECAUSE OF YOU.... Because of you...”

Snow White gripped Uluru’s shoulder. Uluru turned around, tears welling up in her face.

Snow White shook her head.

Snow White knew what Uluru was going to say.

*Because of you, Sorami’s dead*

Because of how her powers worked, both Snow White and Sachiko would’ve believed it. Sachiko would feel guiltier than before.

Snow White didn’t want Uluru to say the wrong thing to her sister. Something that can’t be taken back.

Miscommunication has happened with Snow White in the past. It wasn’t something she wanted to see happen to someone else.

“Just tell me, Sachiko... Why don’t you want to come back? Puk Puck is an amazing person. There’s no reason not to...” said Uluru.

“I know Lady Puck’s amazing. I know she’s kind. I know she’s nice. It’s just... I don’t want to kill anyone,” said Sachiko.

“What? Who are you going to kill? Is someone forcing you?” asked Uluru.

“No... No... it’s not that, it’s my powers. Whatever Lady Puck wants me to do, it must be using my powers. If that’s true, then... I’m going to kill everyone,” said Sachiko crying.

Uluru took a deep breath. Her cheeks reddened again, but this time, not that of anger.

She approached Sachiko and hugged her.

“You big idiot...” said Uluru, as she patted her sister in the back, hugging her as Sachiko cried and cried.

“I didn’t want to kill anyone... I didn’t want to disappoint Lady Puck... I just wanted everyone to be safe...” said Sachiko.

“I should smack you in the head, y’know,” said Uluru, smiling as she hugged her sister tighter.

“I’m sorry... I’m really sorry, sis... Sorami... It’s my fault... I’m sorry,” said Sachiko.

“It’s okay, Sachiko. I’m sorry for being pissed okay? Let’s go home, okay?”

“I’m really sorry...”

“Lady Puck’s not going to hurt you, Sachiko. She’s a kind person. She loves you. She loves all of us. I’m your sister, you should tell me when things get bad, okay? I may be stubborn, but I’ll listen, I promise,” said Uluru.

Sachiko nodded while crying.

Uluru looked at Sachiko in the eyes, and she smiled, reassuring her little sister that everything will be fine.

Uluru wiped a tear away, looking at Snow White.

Snow White simply smiled and nodded.

“Everything good with you two?” she asked.

“You didn’t see me cry, did you?” asked Uluru.

“You going to use your powers to tell me I didn’t?” asked Snow White, smiling.

Uluru and Sachiko chuckled.

“I’ll call Lady Puck... We’ll get you home safe, okay, Sachiko?” said Uluru.

Sachiko nodded.

## ☆ **Princess Deluge**

Deluge opened her eyes.

She was lying down Blue Bell’s lap, in a room that she didn’t know.

She tried to get up, but when she did, it only hurt her. Her right arm was numb, and her back was hurt. Not to mention her head, which kept ringing.

“Deluge, you need to rest,” said the voice of Blue Bell.

Deluge tried to remember what happened. They were in an amusement park, and she was fighting some Shufflins.

After that, she seemed to collapse.

She remembered killing the Ace of Spades. She remembered finally avenging her friends’ death on her hands.

She looked to the side. On the other room, three Magical Girls were talking.

Dark Cutie, Monoshiri Mi-Chan, and Glassianne.

Deluge couldn’t really hear them that well. They were talking, though, and from the words that she *could* pick up, it looked like they were mostly talking about the battle.

She did hear one name in particular...

“Snow White”

Deluge remembered Snow White. She was there when Deluge was with the Pure Elements in the underground base.

Instinctively, she reacted,

“...Snow White? Did they say Snow White?”

“Yes. Do you know her?” asked Blue Bell.

“Yeah...”

“She’s kind of a big deal right now. Magical Girl Hunter and all that,” said Blue Bell.

Snow White was known as the *Magical Girl Hunter* , but Deluge remembered Snow White. She was far from the rumors that she heard in

the Land of Magic.

When Deluge first met Snow White, she had thought that she was going to be an enemy, as they met on opposing sides. Instead, Snow White turned out to be a peaceful mediator.

Her powers were *To hear the voices of people in distress* . That meant that she can sense everyone's true fears and intentions. That must be why she knew.

Snow White was a brilliant strategist.

She knew exactly what to say, she knew exactly what to do, and without her, Deluge might not have made it out alive.

Snow White taught Deluge that she shouldn't give up, she taught Deluge that there were ways to defeat people without directly fighting them.

Deluge took everyone's lessons to heart.

Marika taught her to be strong in the face of opposition.

Filuru taught her to keep going even in your darkest moments.

Inferno taught her the importance of family.

But Deluge didn't know that Snow White was involved in all this as well. Was Snow White in the amusement park? Deluge didn't see her.

Snow White and Deluge didn't have a super close relationship, but Deluge knew that Inferno was her childhood friend. Anyone who's close to Inferno is close to Deluge in her book.

Deluge didn't get to see Inferno's last moments, but thanks to Blue Bell showing her the recordings of the base, she's seen it from another perspective. A camera recording, indirect.

Inferno asked Snow White to hunt down the evil Magical Girls.

Was she doing that right now? Was she hunting down the evil Magical Girls?



Snow White had a human identity too. She detransformed in front of everyone back then. Just like those Magical Girl shows, Magical Girls have a human identity as well, and a real life that they have to maintain.

Not only that, but Snow White also had a mascot character.

A cute black and white creature who smiles all the time. If Deluge remembers right, his name was Fal.

Just like in old Anime, mascot characters help Magical Girls, and assist them in various Magical Girl activities.

Just like in that other Anime Deluge used to watch, *Magical Daisy* .

Daisy and her mascot, Palette, always stuck together. Whenever she would be troubled in real life, Palette was always there to reassure her and support her.

She wondered if Snow White was like that with Fal.

How ironic, isn't it?

Snow White was the Magical Girl Hunter, with the mascot character, hunting evil Magical Girls.

Princess Deluge was the one Magical Girl, with an army of demons, and they're on opposing sides.

...Deluge was the bad guy, wasn't she?

...But everything Deluge has done. She can't go back now. It's too late for her. The only way forward is to keep going.

If Snow White was going to stop her, then Deluge will fight back.

But it will hurt.

Snow White was Inferno's friend. Deluge didn't want to fight her. But she can't stop. Not here, not now.

Deluge stood up again, her chest in pain.

"Deluge, please just rest..." said Blue Bell.

"I know, Blue Bell, just... give me some of the medicine, please?"

Blue Bell handed Deluge the medicine that she always drinks. She dropped pills down her throat, and felt a bit better.

Her hand was still numb. She still felt the scratches and pain from the Shufflins. The medicine wasn't enough.

"Blue Bell... Candy, please?"

"What?"

"I need a mood lifter. I need some candy," said Deluge.

"Deluge, I don't think that's a good idea," said Blue Bell.

"Blue Bell... Please..."

Blue Bell looked away. She sighed, and produced another candy from her hand. Deluge took it in. It melted in her mouth.

She felt happy again. It lifted her spirits. She saw Inferno smiling at her. She saw her family around her.

It only changed her mood, but it was an effective painkiller, and one that Deluge would take to ease the pain. To ease everything.

## ☆ **Glassianne**

Recap.

There were many card soldiers, each with varying different skills. They were all dangerous, but it seemed like Deluge took care of the majority.

Deluge used her army of demons to scatter the card soldiers, as well as to attack Team Puk, which was a bold plan, but some of the demons were also killed.

There was someone talking from far away through a microphone. She was attacked by the demons, but when they jumped down, they didn't come back.

Dark Cutie and Mi-Chan were fighting Snow White, and two other Magical Girls. Dark Cutie held her own against Snow White, Mi-Chan fought the long-haired twintail girl.

Mi-Chan fought bravely, but was ultimately defeated by her. Still, Dark Cutie came to her rescue, and managed to kill her too.

Then, Shuriken came out of nowhere and disrupted the fight, and the other girl, with the popgun, shouted something towards them, which caused Mi-Chan and Dark Cutie to leave.

Afterwards, Team Puk ran away, too fast for Glassianne to follow.

“Annie, did you notice something with those cards earlier?” asked Mi-Chan.

“Hm?”

“They were slow. When we got there and took out some of them, they didn’t even realize we were there. It’s like they were drunk or something,” said Mi-Chan.

“I can’t clearly remember, but you may be right.”

“They weren’t slow,” said Dark Cutie.

“What do you mean?” asked Mi-Chan.

“They were only slow when you attacked them outside their field of vision. They fought normally otherwise,” said Dark Cutie in the corner.

“Which means... They couldn’t hear us,” said Mi-Chan.

“What does that mean, Mi-Chan?” asked Glassianne.

“...Ear plugs. They were wearing some kind of earplug. Why?” asked Mi-Chan.

“The popgun girl, what did she say?” asked Glassianne.

“She said if we didn’t run away, she’d blow herself up and kill all of us,” said Mi-Chan.

Glassianne blinked.

“That’s obviously a bluff, Mi-Chan,” said Glassianne.

Mi-Chan thought for a bit.

“...Wait, yeah... Huh? But I swore I thought she actually had bombs,” said Mi-Chan.

“You don’t know that,” said Glassianne.

“...Damn it. I still think she had those bombs but, you’re right that they may not be there. Then it’s magic,” said Mi-Chan.

“She must have a power that causes people to believe what she says, hence the ear plugs! Fits perfectly right?” asked Glassianne.

“Leader, did you believe her too?” asked Mi-Chan.

“I did”

“So you ran away because of that too, then...”

“No.”

“What?”

“I would’ve stayed. Dying in flames would have been a good end to a villain. I don’t care if she has a bomb that could kill me,” said Dark Cutie.

“But then why’d you go?” asked Mi-Chan.

“Because you left, Mi-Chan,” said Dark Cutie.

“...Wha? Me?”

“I may not care if I die that way, but I’m not selfish. I play for the team. You left, meaning you wanted us to survive. I shed away my selfishness so the team can succeed. I’m the leader, but you’re the strategist,” said Dark Cutie non-chalantly.

“...Huh... I... Don’t know what to say.”

“Either way, we don’t want her to outsmart us again, right, Mi-Chan?” asked Glassianne.

“So we need earplugs?” asked Mi-Chan.

“Perhaps.”

“No good. If we use earplugs we’re removing our senses. What we need are intercoms, a way to communicate information, while blocking

outside audio. The ones we have don't block outside audio, but I might be able to make one using my magic," said Mi-Chan.

"You can make something that has intercom in the word from something here?" asked Glassianne.

"I have a backup for everything. Besides, words are ever-changing," said Mi-Chan, taking out a map of W-City.

"We're going to need more than one intercom Mi-Chan," said Glassianne.

"Relax, Annie. *Map -> Match* "

The giant map became a small matchbox. From the matchbox, Mi-Chan took three matches.

"Oh... smart, Mi-Chan, your powers are really useful," said Glassianne.

"Always have a plan! *Match -> Scotch* " said Mi-Chan.

Each of the matches turned to beer bottles.

" *Scotch -> Watch* "

Each of the bottles turned to watches.

" *Timepiece -> Earpiece* "

One for each. Mi-Chan handed one to Glassianne. She also made two more for Deluge and Blue Bell.

"So what's the plan now, Mi-Chan?" asked Glassianne.

"Do you see them anywhere, Annie?" asked Mi-Chan.

Glassianne adjusted her glasses.

Glassianne's Magical Skill,

*To see anywhere with mysterious glasses .*

Once Glassianne has visited somewhere, she can switch channels inside her glasses to view that place.

She can move around using her glasses as well, but the speed is so small, it can barely catch up to a running Magical Girl.

She needs to have visited the place before, whether in real life, or with her glasses.

Glassianne switched through multiple channels, surrounding the amusement park. No one. Nothing at all.

“Can’t find anyone,” said Glassianne.

“Then check Puck Manor,” said Mi-Chan.

Glassianne switched to the location of Puk Puck’s manor. She hasn’t been inside the manor herself, as entry is forbidden, and even then, she doesn’t know what Puk Puck or any other of them looks like.

She zoomed out, looking across the streets. There, she saw a car, looked a bit like a limousine.

It had some emblem in it. A feathered crown with a waterfall behind it.

“Mi-Chan, do you remember Puk Puck’s emblem?” asked Glassianne.

“Crown with wings. Waterfall,” said Mi-Chan.

“Well, there’s a car here with that emblem on the side,” said Glassianne.

“Is it a magical car?”

“No, it seems ordinary, it just has the emblem,” said Glassianne.

“Then that means they either called for reinforcements or something’s going on. Meaning they already found Sachiko.”

“Wasn’t Snow White carrying a 4-D bag?” asked Glassianne.

“On her waist? I think so. They might’ve hid her inside,” said Mi-Chan.

“Do we ambush the car?” asked Glassianne.

“No. It could be a decoy, or it could be a false alarm. Follow the car, and we should find the enemy,” said Mi-Chan.

“If you’re doing something, I’m joining you,” said a voice from the other side.

Dark Cutie, Mi-Chan, and Glassianne looked to the side. Deluge had woken up, and was walking again, supported by Blue Bell Candy.

“You’re up. You caused a mess back there, y’know?” said Mi-Chan.

Deluge nodded.

Mi-Chan threw two earpieces. One to Deluge, and one to Blue Bell. Deluge caught hers, and Blue Bell dropped hers, picking it up from the floor.

“What are these?” asked Deluge.

“Intercoms. Use them. One of the Magical Girls there has a speech-based power, we think,” said Mi-Chan.

“I don’t need them. I just need you to help me,” said Deluge.

“Listen. We need to work together on this. You can’t just go in with no plan and an army and expect to win. Police are everywhere, and they’re on the lookout. There’s bodies. You realize that, right?” asked Mi-Chan.

“Fine, let’s go,” said Deluge, putting in the intercom. Blue Bell merely followed behind meekly.

“I swear, that girl...” muttered Mi-Chan.

Glassianne was looking at the outside of the abandoned house they were using as a hideout. No police, no witnesses.

“Okay, we’re good to go,” said Glassianne.

Deluge exited the building, so Blue Bell followed. Mi-Chan sighed, and also motioned for Dark Cutie and Glassianne to follow along.

This partnership’s definitely going to end well.

## ☆ **CQ Angel Hammer**

W-City is full of skyscrapers. The tallest ones are often used as resting spots for Magical Girls. Out of sight, and easily reachable by flying Magical Girls like Hammer.

She had to reassess her situation.

She had lost many of her Shufflins. Firstly, the Hearts. She lost 2 of them. Their durability and their plate armor helped negate those losses. She lost 3 Clubs. She also lost 4 Diamonds.

Spades had the highest casualties, as they tried to fight off that blue Magical Girl in order to buy time for the other Shufflins.

She lost number 3 and number 7. Not only that, but she also lost the Face Cards, who were still under possession by Snow White.

She also lost Ace of Spades.

How the hell did that happen?

This is a severe disadvantage. Her next plan needs to be flawlessly perfect if she hoped to succeed.

She might have to consider just killing Sachiko, not just capturing her. The Puck faction can't do the ritual without Sachiko, but they'll lose leverage on them.

Either way, half a victory is better than none.

Hammer thought of her options. She had to make sure her next move would be a good one. The only reason she lost this time was the unexpected rise of a third party. The ambush that caught her off-guard.

So how do you mitigate that?

Alright. Enough deliberating, time to start planning.

There are three options.

First, she could retreat, save the remaining Shufflins. Fight back some other time.

Second, she could fight with her strength in Shufflins right now. With all the losses, and hope for a military victory regardless.

Third, she could team up with the Shufflin Hunter, and capture Premium Sachiko together.



The first one won't happen. Returning now will only label Hammer as incompetent, and she'll probably be killed or worse.

The second one would require a miracle to work. Hammer's perfect but she's not *that* good. Even she knows her limits.

The third one would be difficult to achieve, but would produce the best results. Hammer has no issues working with an enemy to achieve a common goal. Compromise is sometimes necessary. A good strategist and a good leader knows this.

The problem is how to actually achieve that? Firstly, Hammer didn't make a good first impression on that girl, so she had to find some other way to persuade her.

Even if Hammer persuades her, what reason would the girl have to accept Hammer's help. The girl could do anything Hammer could do alone.

Hard, but probably accomplishable.

Hammer began thinking once more. She needed to plan a strategy. This is what Hammer was always good at. Strategizing.

However, Hammer was definitely racing against the clock on this one.

# Interlude

## ☆ Shadow Gale

After three whole hours, Shadow Gale finally got a TV.

She was happy, she finally got what she wanted. However, the next problem came.

The TV had no cable.

It was out of power. Shadow Gale needed some kind of cable to actually turn it on, and to do that...

...She had to gesture again.

She made gestures of a cable. Long lines. She tried to give that impression into the Armor Magical Girl.

The Armor Magical Girl nodded. She came back.

A piano wire.

“No”

Buckwheat.

“No”

A NES controller.

“No”

LAN Cable.

“Close, but no”

A rope with a hook.

“You were so close, but now... no.”

A snake doll.

“Nope.”

Nylon string.

“...Nope.”

Vinyl Tape.

“Sorry... No”

Bandages.

“Eheh... I can already make that.”

Sausages.

“...Definitely not that.”

Finally, after thirty minutes. Shadow Gale tried something else. She pointed at the TV screen, and she made a large X gestures with both her arms.

She shook her head as well.

She then pointed at the power outlet.

The Armor Magical Girl clapped her hands, and snapped her fingers.

Finally, she brought back an cable to power the TV.

“Oh... whew, thank you so much,” said Shadow Gale.

The Armor Magical Girl gave her a thumbs up.

Shadow Gale felt a bit bad. She kind of liked the Armor girl, but she still had to escape from here.

Escaping by subtly manipulating your surroundings...

...Pfle would be proud.

Though Shadow Gale didn't know how to feel about that, given the circumstances.

When she plugged in the cable, the TV displayed nothing but static.

Oh god, now she realized it.

This wasn't an LCD TV, this was one of those old-timey TVs, bad at receiving any form of signal nowadays.

Shadow Gale slammed the TV lightly. Images sometimes formed, but always went back to static.

She sighed heavily, and bonked her head on the TV set repeatedly, being frustrated.

The Armor Magical Girl stopped her from doing that, shaking her head and knocking on her helmet, probably indicating that it's bad to do that.

"Sorry... Just a little frustrated," said Shadow Gale.

The Armor Magical Girl gave her a thumbs up.

Shadow Gale took a deep breath. This is gonna take a while...

# Chapter 4: Across the Streets, Over the Mountains

## ☆ Uluru

Currently, the situation was far from ideal. What happened earlier came completely out of nowhere, and had unexpected consequences.

All of them had to be reported. Puk Puck needed to know what happened.

The Osk Faction.

They tracked them, and then they ambushed them. They would've succeeded as well, but they were driven back by a third party.

What came after were demons, and they fought against the bulk of the Osk Faction's army. The Card soldiers.

It seems these two sides were hostile to each other.

Then, the team encountered two more Magical Girls.

A scholar, and a dark-suited Magical Girl.

They fought, and in the process, they figured out the powers of these Magical Girls. All of that was reported. The ambush, the fight, the powers, everything.

They also reported the sudden appearance of another possible Magical Girl.

A sniper of sorts, only this time, attacking with shuriken and kunai. Seems friendly and helpful, but for now, it's unknown.

In the end, they managed to escape. Uluru reported that as well.

No enemies were killed by Uluru's team. She prioritized survival over elimination of the enemy.

However, there were sacrifices made...

...Now comes the hard part.

Uluru had already held back any tears. She had to do this with conviction, not weakness. She had to report it.

*Sorami is dead .*

She typed those words in a new paragraph, in a text meant to send for Puk Puck.

She couldn't actually believe that she'd type those words. She never believed that the day would come when she would have to tell everyone about her youngest sister's death.

It doesn't work like that... right?

She tried to be cold, hard, and emotionless. This was a report, from the captain of the guard. There's no room for emotions there.

But typing those words took more from Uluru than she thought it would.

Typing those words means accepting the fact that her youngest sister was gone. Her youngest sister was gone, and there was nothing she could do about it.

She didn't want to look at it anymore. She just tapped 'Send', and awaited a reply.

After a while, it came,

*' I'm so sorry, Uluru. Let's try to make the best of it, okay?'*

The reply didn't make Uluru feel any calmer. It felt so... casual. It felt out of place. It just made Uluru even more nervous.

There was no way the text wouldn't have been received by Puk Puck.

There was no reason it was intercepted.

This was definitely a reply from her.

So why doesn't it make her feel any better?

Uluru looked at her arms. They were trembling. Was it fear? Was it rage? Whatever it was, she couldn't stop them from shaking.

Her lip was shaking too, and before she knew it, she began crying once again.

She held up her head and shook it rapidly. This can't be real. This shouldn't be real.

*Crying isn't going to bring Sorami back .*

She wanted to be a reliable older sister, the one that could protect her siblings, but she failed.

Sachiko was watching her anxiously. Uluru knows she means well. She's probably worried about her, but what she really did was make Uluru even more stressed about herself.

People shouldn't see Uluru like this. She was the Captain of the Guard, she was the eldest, she had to be the one to show bravery.

Uluru imagined Puk Puck's smiling face.

She failed her.

Puk Puck always taught her how to be the best she could be. Puk Puck led her to the right path. Puk Puck loved her.

Puk Puck would feel the worst after losing Sorami.

Puk Puck loves Uluru, Puk Puck loves Sachiko, and Puk Puck loves Sorami.

Even without the ritual, Puk Puck would cherish Sachiko as her own daughter.

Right now, that should be the priority. Protecting Premium Sachiko. Bringing her home safely, and making sure nothing happens to her.

They were already passing through the bridge they had been hiding under. In retrospect, hiding under that bridge in the pouring rain honestly just looked sad.

Uluru looked to the side, and she saw a variety of shrubs, trees, tall grass.

Natural things, beautiful things that she can use to distract herself from reality.

She stared again as the scenery moved and moved. She didn't really care much. She took note of the scenery, but it was just passing objects.

A river, calm and serene. Parts of it were clear blue, and some parts had garbage on it. The parts closer to the slums.

Slums? Ah, they were closer to the city now.

The natural scenery slowly changed to rural housing. Soon, it'll become buildings and buildings once again.

Uluru didn't notice the change at first. It's not like she was paying attention in the first place.

And here's the entertainment district.

There's some chain curry stores, a department store, and a karaoke bar.

Heh... Karaoke bar.

Sorami loved that.

*"Hey sis, wanna go to a Karaoke bar?" asked Sorami.*

*"What? Why so sudden?" questioned Uluru.*

*"I just love singing is all! Never been to Karaoke before!"*

Sorami then asked Puk Puck if they can go out to a Karaoke bar. To which Puk Puck then replied, *"Well, if that's what you want, Sorami! But let's wait till you're older okay? Lots of nasty things in those places. But I promise I'll take you there!"*

They were going to take her for Karaoke when Sorami was older. It would've only been two more years, perhaps.

Uluru didn't like singing, nor did she enjoy Karaoke. However, she loved Sorami, and she'd do it for her. Puk Puck would do it for her too.

Puk Puck was the one who brought them together.



Before all this, Uluru remembered when she was all alone, young, scared, a lost child. She had to remember that she was still older than Sorami at that time.

Puk Puck tended to take in lost children into her household and give them new homes.

That's when Uluru met Sorami and Sachiko. Puk Puck treated them like family, and they became adopted sisters.

Alone, they can be broken, but together, they were strong.

When one of them got cold, the second would nurse them and care for them, while the third would give them medicine.

When one of them got hungry, the second would bake food, and the third would feed the first one.

They slept together, holding hands, comforting each other if they were scared or cold.

They looked out for each other. They weren't blood-related, but they were sisters nonetheless.

Uluru tightened her fists.

Magical Girls are strong.

Their mental strength is beyond that of humans.

They are both physically and mentally powerful. So Uluru... Uluru has to be strong too... Even if Sorami's gone, Uluru has to be strong.

It's only natural.

She can't cry.

She can't let her sisters see her cry.

Puk Puck was going to save the Land of Magic. She was going to use the ritual to save it, and Uluru had to make it successful.

Uluru will do her best.

For the sake of Sorami. She risked her life to get Sachiko back.

Uluru always thought she was the strongest, but in reality, it was Sorami. Sorami was the one that glued them together, and Sorami was the one who always seemed calm in any situation.

All Uluru did was panic and scream. Sorami was level-headed, and understood how her sisters worked better than Uluru ever did.

Uluru will get Sachiko back home.

Even if it costs Uluru her life.

She's going to get her safely home.

That's what Sorami did, and that's what Uluru will do.

To think, Uluru wanted to be a role model to her sisters, to become someone they can aspire to be, when Sorami's already filled that role for Uluru.

When Uluru shouted at the enemy earlier that day, she poured all her emotions into it.

Her power makes people that listen to her believe every word she says, and while what she said about suicide bombing was a lie, she truly did want to hurt them.

She couldn't physically do it. She knew she wasn't strong, but she wanted them to be afraid. She wanted them to be scared.

She was so angry, she almost cried. She wanted to make them pay for killing her sister.

Magical Girls shouldn't cry, though. She knows that.

Uluru remembered again, memories from her childhood. She wanted the memories to stop, but that's all she kept thinking about since Sorami died.

It was when Puk Puck gathered Uluru, Sachiko, and Sorami in the main room of the manor together, shortly just after adopting them.

*"No matter what happens. I'll always protect you three, okay? Don't worry! Puck's always gonna be with you guys, okay?"*

Puk Puck hugged all of them. They were still young children. They were so happy to finally get a guardian.

Puk Puck promised that she'd protect them all.

She then took Uluru aside. Uluru remembered her words.

*"You're the eldest, Uluru. If I can't be there, you need to protect your sisters, okay?" said Puck.*

*"O-Okay, Lady Puck," said Uluru.*

*"That's my girl!"*

But Uluru couldn't protect Sorami.

Sorami died under her watch.

But Sachiko is still here. So now, Uluru has to protect Sachiko.

Uluru *will* protect Sachiko.

She's going to protect her, even if it may cost Uluru her life.

She loosened her grip on her arms, and she glanced back behind her. Aside from Sachiko looking nervous, there was also Snow White.

She was staring at the Kunai, glimmering in the sunlight. Uluru understood that Snow White rarely talks about herself, but part of her was angry at Snow.

Sorami's dead, and all she was doing is playing with that damn Kunai, like Sorami's death meant nothing at all.

But Uluru should hold her temper. Snow White held her own against that dark Magical Girl, while Uluru was just groaning in pain in the ground.

Uluru didn't even think to use her power earlier, because the card soldiers didn't seem to respond.

If she had... Everything could've been saved.

Snow White was just hired by Puk Puck. She'd get the job done, and when it's done, she'll get her payment. Perhaps Uluru should keep that in

mind.

Snow White's probably seen a lot of Magical Girls die, too. Her name was the Magical Girl Hunter after all. Maybe death is just a common thing to her.

Either way, Sorami's death wasn't Snow's fault. It was Uluru's. She didn't contribute, while both Snow and Sorami did.

Sorami would want her to stay calm. So let's just stay calm until she reaches Puck Manor.

### ☆ **Puk Puck**

Uluru had told her everything she needed to know about the situation.

She also requested for any relief or reinforcements, just in case Sachiko would be attacked again.

The truth of the matter is that Puk Puck really has her hands full. Spreading her forces thin to help Uluru would mean weakening another part of her faction.

Had it only been the Osk Faction, Puck could possibly play her cards right, but now there's rumors of another faction, with an army of demons.

With this information, Puk Puck isn't sure where to best place her people. Not until she knows more about this new faction.

However, are they even hostile? They attacked Osk's faction as well. Could they be allied with? Puk didn't want to make any sudden moves.

Uluru mentioned that they didn't know who the Demon Faction members are. Escaping them was a close call.

So many people are heading after Premium Sachiko, it's almost impossible to completely protect her unless she arrives back in Puck Manor.

Uluru's report was voiceless, and it's clear she still wanted to be seen as in control of the situation, but Puk knew Uluru. Her words were filled

with unnecessarily huge vocabulary, prolonging sentences, then suddenly shortening them.

She was nervous. She was scared. Uluru just didn't want to show it through the phone.

That's just like her.

Despite any stress, she keeps it inside, and tries not to let it show that she's scared, instead often acting like a mad brutish wolf in order to show dominance.

"Sorry I couldn't help, Uluru-Chan," muttered Puk Puck as she opened a drawer with some potato chips and a soda can.

She took out a triangular chip, placed it in her mouth, and began chewing while thinking.

Sending more people to help out Uluru's team might be the best course of action, but only if Puk knows what they're dealing with.

Otherwise, they will just get killed by the demons and whatever other Magical Girls are in that faction.

More victims is bad.

Right now, the Puck Faction is horribly understaffed. She's trying to save as many people as she can in preparation for the ceremony.

Sachiko is crucial to that.

Sorami dying was a hard blow for Puk Puck, both in terms of manpower and in terms of emotions. Puck truly loved her as her own daughter.

Puk Puck always kept close watch of her friends, making sure they're well-assisted.

She didn't even want to consider the possibility of Uluru and Sachiko dying.

She ate another potato chip.

The salty taste was good. It was a nice change from the sweets she usually eats.

She opened her soda can, that iconic hissing noise came out. She then took a drink straight from the can, inclining it diagonally downwards towards her mouth.

Carbonated drinks, salty tastes of the chips. The stimulus felt by tasting these delicious things. Puk loved that.

It's one of the benefits of having a body, the ability to feel stimuli.

But there are some types of stimuli that she didn't want to feel at all.

The feeling of losing a close friend, and the feeling of dying. Those are the only two Puk didn't want to feel at all.

And yet, now, Sorami had just been killed, and it was affecting Puk greatly.

Uluru, Sachiko, and now, Snow White. They have to survive.

Snow White was a rare specimen. She's one of the few Magical Girls to have ever gotten Grim Heart to interact with her, thus breaking her defenses.

Not only that, she managed to escape Grim Heart's slaughter, and is one of the few survivors with enough combat skill and smarts to do so.

She's a treasure.

Puk Puck needs to keep her close, and ensure that she's trustworthy and loyal to her cause.

She leaned back on her chair and looked up in the ceiling. A beautiful angelic panorama was painted on the top. Kind of like the paintings you'd see in those large churches.

A moment of peace, captured. Sadly, no longer the reality.

And the reality of it all is that Puk Puck is lacking manpower. She had to arrange enough people to protect the ritual site, as well as protect Uluru's team.

The next few moves that Puk Puck will do will be very important. The people she'll recruit has to be sufficient, and every move counts.

Not only that, everyone's going after Sachiko like moths to a flame.  
Puk Puck began thinking of Sorami. A tear flew down her right cheek.

## ☆ Pfle

The news reports and other rumors that Pfle had received were hard to take at face value. After all, people tend to exaggerate what they see, and she needed facts.

She needed to hear the reports from Deluge and the 3 Magical Girls that she sent with her.

Outside, it was raining, and the pitter patter of raindrops tapped across Pfle's window. She walked over to it, looking out to the distance.

*Is it raining where Mamori is right now?*

The thought crossed her mind. Was Mamori okay? Was she comfortable? Was she being treated well?

She didn't want to think too hard about it.

W-City is sunny right now, and the team would prefer it that way. Dark Cutie is far more effective in the sunlight.

According to what the 3 had spoken, Deluge led an army of Homunculi towards the city, there were hundreds of smaller ones, reinforced with larger fighters.

Overwhelming strength, that was Deluge's battle plan. It's not the most well thought out battle plan, but in this case where you know where the target is, as well as the strength of your enemies, often the most straightforward plan is enough.

If Pfle had been leading the charge, it should've been simple to secure Premium Sachiko as Deluge wanted.

However, things got complicated.

The Osk Faction had apparently sent their most well-known soldier, a Magical Girl by the name of Shufflin. They were also led by a

commander, whose name is still unknown to Pflē.

Other than that, however, there were no other reinforcements.

This makes sense, as the higher-ups probably don't want to spend as much resources as necessary to retrieve Sachiko. They deemed a single commander and a Shufflin army to be enough.

Their biggest loss seems to be Grim Heart, but they've learned to manage without her presence well enough.

Losing Grim Heart however was something the Osk Faction didn't approve of, which is probably why they denied having any higher-ups than needed to lead the battle.

Alright, that makes sense. Now for the other problem.

The Puck Faction.

Puk Puck has connections to W-City, that much is known, so where is her faction? Her search team was attacked, and she's clearly a victim on this ambush, she has no reason not to retaliate and reinforce.

She wouldn't lose any public opinion either. People understand defending what's yours. The Osk Faction will instead look bad after this.

Not only that, but since the Puck Faction has ties to W-City, they also know the city inside-out. They're fighting on home turf, so why is it that they're not retaliating with full strength?

There so much information that Pflē didn't know or understand about these Sages. Is Puck deliberately trying to plan out something, or did she just reveal that she has no cards in play?

Even stranger is the fact that Deluge seems to know these things. Based on her recent report to Pflē, she'd confirmed several things.

She knows that the Puck Faction is looking for Premium Sachiko, who ran away. She also knows the Osk Faction is targeting her as well. She also knows the location of Premium Sachiko *and* Puk Puck's search team.



She also said that Snow White was on the scene. Snow White was with the Puck Faction? The Puck Faction had the assistance of the Magical Girl Hunter?

Deluge also has an army of Homunculi. How does someone like her stumble into information like that?

Was it an inside job? Did someone in the Puck Faction or the Osk Faction betray them and spoke to Deluge, the one Magical Girl that's a complete outsider to all of this?

Or was it another Magical Girl? A third party who wants both Factions to suffer?

It makes no sense for it to be the Puck Faction. If it was, then Deluge's only purpose was to be a panic button for when they get attacked. Also, the agents Pfle sent with her fought against the Puck Faction.

The Osk Faction might have leaked information. However, that makes no sense too. Why would they go so hard to have Deluge kidnap Shadow Gale to use Pfle if they can just easily use the Shufflins?

What's the missing piece?

Something's *missing* .

Pfle closed the curtains to her room, chuckling at herself as she grabbed her head and rested it on a table.

This isn't the kind of appearance she lets anyone but her closest family members see.

Pfle knows something is missing. Crucial information that could help her understand the whole situation, but she didn't know *what* is missing.

Did Shadow Gale hide something from her?

...She wouldn't do that, would she? Pfle didn't want to think negative thoughts about Shadow Gale. She couldn't bring herself to think badly of her.

But she still noticed that Mamori was very distant lately.

Maybe...

...But first she had to secure Mamori's safety. Shadow Gale needed to be back.

To do that, Pfler needs to start being active. There are only a few fighting personnel in the Human Resources For each of those personnel, there's even fewer who can both fight and adapt to the situation.

She gave the ones she trusted over to Deluge, but for some reason, Deluge's plans just... fell apart.

Pfler took a deep breath. She turned on her Magical Phone. She began texting.

### ☆ **Monoshiri Mi-Chan**

Beyond the rooftops of the skyscrapers and houses that surrounded the city, Mi-Chan awaited Glassianne's instructions.

When the car that they were following arrived at one of Glassianne's checkpoints, Mi-Chan immediately headed to work, shadowing the car from above.

In the sky, there were also some demons on the lookout, making it easy to fall back in case Mi-Chan failed.

Mi-Chan won't fail.

There was supposedly one driver in the car, but Mi-Chan didn't know how many passengers were inside just yet. The windows were tinted black and it was impossible for even Magical Girls to see through.

Mi-Chan remembered the map of W-City that she saw before. She took note of the road that the car took, and the general direction of the car. Then, she mentally mapped the sections of W-City.

When remembering a map, it's useless to remember every single road and every single possible turn.

Instead, you need to remember chunks and sections. If you separate each road into several different sections, you can map the exits to each section.

Then, instead of remembering 10 different roads, you only need to remember 4. Strategically place scouts on roads that lead off to other sections, and you can track down a vehicle no problem.

If the vehicle never reaches your exit, then they've stopped somewhere in that section.

Mi-Chan's memory was good, so she can remember a few roads and where to be when trying to spot them.

Glassianne also helps here, thanks to her powers.

The car seems to prefer taking the outer roads of the city. Mi-Chan jumped across the rooftops, always trying to keep it in view.

Sometimes she had to drop down in the more rural areas, hiding in the grasses to keep an eye.

Then, when the car passed through a tunnel, Mi-Chan ran across the National Highway, waiting for it in the other side.

The car was bound by the laws of the city, so it had to follow the speed limit, making it slower than a Magical Girl. The driver was clearly frustrated, as they always tried to turn around cars or cut them off.

But this also means the driver didn't know Mi-Chan was tailing them.

They still stopped at stoplights, and gave way to pedestrians crossing the street. Not the attitude of a driver who knows they're being followed.

On the side of the car was a crown with feathers. Definitely Puk Puck's.

However, there's no signs of magic. This is an ordinary car. Was this what they're using to escort Sachiko?

The car eventually escaped the city, and rose across to the mountains.

Why would they do that? The mountains are a longer route that spans outside the city grounds. If they wanted to go somewhere fast, a straight

line across the city would be better.

Is there a reason they're taking a longer detour?

Could they have already known that Mi-Chan was following them? Or perhaps the car itself was a decoy to lure potential followers.

Mi-Chan didn't have enough time to think of the possibilities. She had to make it quick. The car can't pass through the mountains directly, but Mi-Chan can, which means she can wait for the car to come by.

She used her earpiece to relay instructions to the demons.

"Meet me at the bottom of the hill, be there in about 30 minutes or less, don't attack until I do," said Mi-Chan.

She waited at the exit of the mountain road. This is where the car will pass through. No doubt about it. Now she just had to make sure she was prepared.

She gathered some pebbles from the ground. Just like before.

*" Pebble -> Rifle "*

She took a deep breath. She shot it in the air, making sure that it made the barrel of her gun smoke. She placed the gun on the ground, and then she caught the smoke in both hands.

*" Vapor -> Fire . Ngh... Fire -> Firebomb "*

The smoke in her hands burnt, but only for a bit, as it then transformed into a grenade. Two grenades, one in each hand. Can never be too safe.

Next, she needed a way to stop the car. She looked around her surroundings, attempting to find some object to transform.

Come on... she needed the right word.

She felt a breeze at her neck. Okay, this could work.

She raised her arms.

*" Squall -> Ball . Squall -> Ball . Squall -> Ball . "*

Three balls, Mi-Chan went down to the roads, juggling each ball in her hands, and as she passed the roads, every time a ball was about to leave her hands.

*“ Ball -> Wall . Ball -> Wall . Ball -> Wall . ”*

Mi-Chan had a lot of strength to her. While she didn't normally fight, she *can* fight, and physical labor isn't a problem for her.



After all, Mi-Chan was a participant in one of Mao Pam's Hell Survival Games once. She hadn't forgotten that moment. She had to strain her brain to even last against Magical Girls there.

Long walls lined up against the road, with Mi-Chan behind it. She counted down the seconds before the car would come.

Then she heard it.

Now it was time. While the car was still moving, Mi-Chan pulled the pin on her grenade, held the rifle close to her chest, and threw the grenade over the walls.

She heard the car screeching to a halt, and a loud explosion. Crashes, and what seemed to be vibrations in the wall.

Mi-Chan rushed up and went around the wall, seeing the car crashing towards it, smoking and wheels on fire.

As Mi-Chan approached the car however, she heard a noise in the sky. Instinctively, she turned around.

3 Shuriken.

Quickly, she fired 3 shots with her rifle, one for each.

Then she saw more.

*Shit!*

*Blam!*

*Blam!*

*Blam!*

Mi-Chan fired her rifle at each incoming Shuriken, hiding behind the wall for the others coming towards her. These things were homing, so she had to play it smart.

She heard rustling in the trees, and Mi-Chan saw the figure standing in the shadows of the branches.

A ninja, dressed in full black, with a red scarf. On her right arm, a Shuriken in each finger. On her left arm... Nothing.

She was one-armed.

This must be the sniper. Mi-Chan gritted her teeth, and the ninja simply stared at her.

## ☆ Uluru

Uluru didn't speak much for the entire journey, but she wondered how much Snow White could know.

Snow White's power was the ability to listen to your hearts' fears, right?

Could she hear how scared Uluru was? Could she sense Uluru's fear of losing her sister right now?

Snow White was still just walking silently near both Uluru and Sachiko.

No point in keeping quiet now.

"Hey, Snow? Do you know the name of that Magical Girl we fought? The dark one?" asked Uluru.

"Dark Cutie," said Snow White.

"Dark Cutie? Sounds... familiar, for some reason," said Uluru.

It really did sound familiar. Had Uluru met her before?

"Of course it's familiar, Pon! Haven't you ever seen *Cutie Healer*, Pon?" asked Fal, suddenly appearing from Snow White's pocket.

"Cutie Healer? The Anime?" asked Uluru.

"Dark Cutie was a recurring villain in *Cutie Healer Galaxy*, Pon! Always fighting against Cutie Altair and her partner Cutie Vega, Pon! She even showed up in the *Cutie Healer Movies* series, Pon!"

"Wow. I didn't realize the franchise was huge," said Uluru.

"There's a crossover movie every season, Pon! The current Cuties and the previous ones team up to fight a great evil, Pon! It airs almost every year, Pon!"

"Fal, your voice is a bit too loud. Mind keeping down the excitement?" said Snow White with a smile.

"Ah... sorry, Pon! I get excited when talking about Magical Girl Anime, Pon!"

"Is it really that big of a deal, though? Being in an Anime?" asked Uluru.



“Of *course* , Pon! It’s a Magical Girl’s status symbol! You get name recognition, you get money, and most importantly, you’re in an Anime, Pon! Sometimes you can make your own franchise, or join the ever-popular *Cutie Healer* series, Pon!”

“Fal... you’re doing it again,” said Snow White.

“Sorry, sorry! I’ll be quiet, Pon!”

“You really love Magical Girl Anime don’t you, Fal?” asked Uluru with a smile.

“You bet! It’s a nice change of pace from reality, Pon!”

Uluru didn’t really ask more about it, but she saw that Snow White smiled for a little bit, before going back to normal again.

Her gaze went from Snow White to Sachiko, who was still nervously shivering.

Uluru went next to her, placing her hand on Sachiko’s shoulder.

“Hey. You okay?” asked Uluru.

Sachiko looked at Uluru, and began hugging her older sister once again, crying softly. Uluru looked at Snow White, and Snow White nodded silently.

Uluru hugged her sister. Softly, she whispered to her ear.

“It’s okay, Sachiko. I’m here now. You can cry to me, okay? I promise, I’m going to keep you safe. I’m going to keep you safe even if it kills me. I’m going to make sure you stay alive, and we’ll be back home in Lady Puck’s manor, okay?”

Sachiko nodded slowly, but she also whimpered.

“...I’m sorry,” said Sachiko.

“What are you apologizing for? Don’t cry, okay? You can apologize all you want when we get back home. Let’s just take you there for now, and do our best in the ritual, okay?” said Uluru.

Sachiko removed herself from Uluru’s grip.

“I’m... I’m sorry, because... I... I’ll go home, but... I’m not doing it,” said Sachiko.

Uluru blinked.

What did she just say?

“What?”

“I’m not doing the ritual,” said Sachiko.

“...Why?”

“I... I don’t know, I just...”

Uluru grabbed Sachiko by the collar. Her face was red again, with tears. Snow White instantly walked over to Uluru and grabbed her shoulder.

“Uluru. Hey, Uluru,” said Snow White as she gripped Uluru’s shoulder.

“Don’t give me ‘ *I don’t know* !’ dammit! WHY? Do you realize how much we’ve sacrificed just to rescue you out of that damned park? Sorami’s *dead* , Sachiko! Our sister’s *dead* ! Because *you* ran out of the house! *You* ran away! Everyone wants you back, and everyone just wants you to take part in the ritual! That’s all!”

“I’m sorry, sis... I’m really sorry, I just...”

“Don’t just say *sorry* , TELL ME WHY?”

“Uluru, that’s *enough* !” said Snow White, pulling the two apart and standing in between both of them.

“She’s MY sister, this is between her and me,” said Uluru.

“That may be true but you should be careful about what you say before you realize you can’t take it back,” said Snow White, staring down Uluru.

Uluru’s face reddened. She was saying the truth. She had to be careful, because of how her powers work, she has to always be careful about what she says too.

She grasped her hair. Her world is being torn apart. Her sister is dead, and now everything’s falling apart.

Snow White glanced over to Sachiko.

“Sachiko, I’m going to ask this to you as well, because I need to know. Why don’t you want to go back to Puk Puck and do the ritual? I tried to read your heart but it didn’t give me any answers,” said Snow White.

“I really don’t know... I’m sorry... I just have a bad feeling that people will die if I use my powers in the ritual,” said Sachiko.

Why can’t she just talk to Uluru? What really was troubling Sachiko?

Yes, she was cowardly. Uluru knew this. She was okay with this. This was just how her sister was, ever since they were kids.

But this wasn’t the Sachiko she remembered. Sachiko always knew why she was scared. You can always tell why.

It seems like she’s scared of using her powers for the ritual, but she really has no proof of how the ritual would be conducted. So why is she so stressed out about this?

*Sachiko... why can’t you just tell me?*

## BEEP BEEP BEEP

Fal appeared from Snow White’s pocket.

“Magical Girl detected, Pon!”

Snow White instantly looked around. “Sachiko, Uluru, get behind me, okay?”

### ☆ Pfle

Deluge’s report, as well as Dark Cutie’s personal notes mentioned that they were attacked by a Magical Girl with Shuriken and Kunai.

Pfle was the head of Human Resources. It shouldn’t be hard to find Magical Girls with Shuriken and Kunai.

It narrows it down when Dark Cutie mentioned these were homing Shuriken.

There was one Magical Girl with homing Shuriken. A ninja with one-arm.

Her name was Ripple.

Ripple's disappearance was actually a more famous case within the Land of Magic. Not due to the individual, but because of the incident she was involved in.

The incident that killed the most powerful Magical Girl of the generation, Mao Pam.

This incident happened in B-City.

7753 was there. That was Pfle's subordinate. Why didn't Pfle remember anything about that?

She tapped her forehead. If Pfle was there, she would've taken control of the situation. She would've given instructions to 7753.

She didn't remember doing it. An incident this big and she's missing from it.

Pfle knows herself. She knows that she's willing to become active in other events. This doesn't seem like her. What was going on?

She felt disadvantaged. There was a huge hole in her memory that she can't explain, and without Shadow Gale by her side, she's at her most vulnerable.

Now with the Three Sages moving against each other, and Deluge making moves in W-City, Pfle had to figure out how to maneuver past all of this.

She remembered her grandfather. He had many contacts and used them in order to secure the advantage.

Pfle climbed up the ranks of Human Resources precisely because she knew how to handle people, she knew where to best place people, and she knew the best course of action almost all the time.

She opened the registry of the Magical Girls.

What was Puk Puck's ritual? Why did it involve Sachiko? How did Deluge know about it?

Pfle needed someone on the field that she could trust to monitor Deluge. Right now, Deluge has her with Shadow Gale as leverage. Pfle had to change that.

But who can she trust? Who can she trust that can watch over Deluge from a distance?

*Ah... Of course...*

She opened her Magical Phone once more, and began texting.

### ☆ **Puk Puck**

Three pillows were placed adjacent to each other. Puk Puck sat down there, lying down while calmly assessing the situation.

Perhaps it's time to pick them up.

After weighing the risks, Puk Puck has decided to leave the manor. Retrieving Sachiko was the most important task.

So now, Puk Puck had to get dressed for the occasion.

Did you know that people's first impressions are often decided based on their looks alone? Yes, regardless of what a person was like, their looks are the first thing you see.

Sometimes, you instantly aren't interested in a person if they look horrible to you.

Appealing to your tastes in terms of how they look can be the difference if a stranger would leave you or give you a chance.

So Puk Puck always dressed to impress.

Her servants brought her a change of clothes.

There were so many to choose from. An elegant dress, a simple summer outfit, gothic lolita.

Elegant, cute, casual, so many choices.

Puk Puck dressed up for a gown-like look. Satisfied, she headed forward to the main gate, and entered a car.

A luxurious car, fit for a Sage. She entered the backseat, whose entire width was far too wide of a person of Puck's stature.

She smiled at all her servants, and they all smiled back. Entering the car, she took a rest in the chair, lying down and stretching her body.

She thought of Premium Sachiko.

Sachiko running away did hurt her, but she was willing to forgive everything Sachiko did. She admitted, there were times where she sometimes just wanted to bonk Sachiko in the head, but in the end, she could never bring herself to hurt her own daughter.

Sachiko would cry if she was scared, and then she'd hug Puk Puck.

Puck would accept that hug, and she'd whisper that everything would be okay. Then Sachiko would tell Puck all about her worries. The things she was afraid of, the things that made her cry.

Puk Puck would reassure her while gently tapping her back, or stroking her hair, or giving her the warmest hug a mother could give.

Premium Sachiko really was a beautiful girl. Lush golden hair, a cute face you could pinch, and her personality, while sometimes it could get annoying, can really grow on you.

Puk Puck stared at the ceiling of the car. She's coming for Sachiko.

## Interlude

☆ **Shadow Gale**

"Thank you, again... Really, thank you, you don't have to-"

The Armor Girl shook her head and just raised her thumb, handing her a remote control for the TV.

Shadow Gale smiled awkwardly.

She needed to be alone. She can't modify this TV if the Armor Girl was watching her every step.

Shadow Gale pressed the on button of the remote control. When she did, the TV only showed static.

She sat down, and she smiled while staring at the TV and back at Armor Girl.

Aarmor Girl placed one finger on her chin. Then she raised her hand, index finger pointing up, in an 'Aha!' pose.

She ran off, closing the door.

Shadow Gale quickly pressed her hands on the TV screen.

*Come on, come on, think!*

Her magic takes time based on the complexity of the device, and she had to think fast before the Armor Girl come-

...Never mind, she's back.

The Armor Girl came back with a box.

Opening it, Shadow Gale saw what seems to be a game console. This game console was around two generations ago.

The Armor Girl got to work, attaching the cables to the TV, then changing the TV channels to the game console.

"...You want me to... play?" asked Shadow Gale.

Aarmor Girl gave her a controller and turned on the console. The game was a very retro game. Graphics were bad, and the gameplay was a bit wonky, but it was two generations ago, anyways.

It was an action game, so it was straightforward.

Shadow Gale remembered playing a game like this when she was in elementary school. Back then she didn't understand much of the story of games, nor did she understand much of what was going on. All she did back then was just play the game and figure out as she went along.

Now, re-experiencing the game again felt nostalgic. She remembered some scenes and dialogue, and could easily reorient herself to the right control scheme.

Armor Girl sat behind her.

Uh Oh.

Shadow Gale played the game, doing her best to keep going for as long as she needs. But the Armor Girl just watched her play.

Shadow Gale didn't even have to turn around. She knew the feeling of being watched while playing her games.

She was reminded of a memory when she was in elementary.

Shadow Gale would be busy playing games in Kanoe's room, while Kanoe watched her in the comfort of her bed.

She'd play the game, but because Kanoe's watching her, she couldn't concentrate and would always lose.

*"Argh, I can never win"*

*"What's wrong, Mamori?"*

*"Nggh, it's nothing..."*

*"Hmhm, you're angry that you're losing all the time?"*

*"Well, you keep staring at me playing! I'm a lot better alone, I'm not kidding!"*

*"Why don't I give it a go?"*

*"Not until I win!"*

*"Sore loser and you're selfish. Oh, Mamori..."*



Those memories were good memories. Ones she wished she could stay with forever, before all of this happened.

30 minutes had passed, and Shadow Gale kept playing the game. Armor Girl cheered her if she won, and would pat her shoulder if she died.

It's not like the game was bad, so Shadow Gale really was entertained at playing this, but Armor Girl needed to go away if Shadow Gale wanted to get to work.

Could it be that she knew Shadow Gale's power?

No, impossible. If she did, she wouldn't have given her the TV in the first place. No kidnapper gives someone a cellphone when they're bored.

If she knew Shadow Gale's power, she'd have given her something like a board game, or some puzzles to play with instead. No, Shadow Gale was confident that Armor Girl is just...

...really really into games.

Also, as far as Action Games go, she had to pick the hard ones. Shadow Gale looked at the collection of games, and all of them were known to be challenging or hard.

Well, it used to cause her a lot of frustration, but now her only frustration was being constantly watched like this.

How did she handle it as a kid?

Ah...

Shadow Gale picked up a second controller and offered it to the Armor Girl.

Perhaps playing together might end up making her more loose. Plus, it builds a bond. Maybe at the very least, Shadow Gale could convince her to let her go, or at least leave the room for a while.

"Wanna play?" asked Shadow Gale.

Armor Girl looked around, then pointed at herself, as if asking, 'Me?'

Shadow Gale nodded.

Armor Girl instantly grabbed the 2P controller and plugged it into the console, sitting down next to Shadow Gale.

“Co-Op mode?”

Armor Girl nodded.

“Alright. Hope you’re as good as you claim to be,” said Shadow Gale grinning.

Armor Girl raised her thumb, and the two began playing their game.

# Chapter 5: Farewell, My Friend

## ☆ Blue Bell Candy

Blue Bell Candy is a Magical Girl. For some reason, she continued to become a Magical Girl. However, she had no motivation, she had no ambition.

She didn't even have a philosophy to live by.

No principles, no assertiveness, she lacks self-esteem and self-confidence.

Even her selection test mentor was worried about her.

"You know how many people would give anything to be in your position right now?"

It's not that Blue Bell was lazy or clumsy or incompetent. Far from it.

It's not that Blue Bell didn't like Magical Girls, she thought they were amazing things.

Blue Bell just didn't believe in herself. However, most people who had low self-esteem would be hard-pressed to actually work.

Blue Bell was a hard worker. She always performed her best at everything. Hence why she passed her selection test.

She didn't believe anything would come of her, but she always tried hard anyways, because everything she was doing was for the benefit of someone else. And that someone else would suffer if Blue Bell didn't do her best.

The determining factor of becoming a Magical Girl is your *Magical Potential*.

The problem with a system like that is that people who might be perfect for becoming a Magical Girl might not be chosen because they just didn't have potential. The reverse can also be true.

After Blue Bell passed her selections, mostly due to her hard work, she had to reevaluate her position within the Land of Magic.

Firstly, she can't exactly fight with the best veterans out there. Her magic wasn't even good for that kind of thing.

Her hard-working nature eventually landed her a job in Research and Development. A desk job where she received some good pay and did some good work.

A 9-to-5 job, a sign of mediocrity. Nothing really to brag about, but it's also a job, so it's nothing to look down upon.

It really was just that. An average job, with average pay.

Blue Bell didn't really enjoy her job, but she didn't hate it. Normally most employees would look for a promotion, but Blue Bell just focused on working hard.

The fact that Blue Bell always worked hard meant that eventually, she was getting so many raises that her salary was comparable to the elite workers of the Division.

Yet Blue Bell had no ambition to rise up the ranks, which created the unique problem of having your average worker be paid a high-paying salary.

Despite Blue Bell being able to change literally any aspect of her life, her magic will always be the same no matter what.

However, her hard-working nature eventually brought her in contact with several prominent members of the Land of Magic. They were all faces, all a blur, all working with Blue Bell at some point or another.

Her higher-up connections gave her an even more increased salary.

How'd it get this far? Blue Bell didn't really remember. Most of it was just a haze.

She couldn't even remember how she became a Magical Girl in the first place. Not that it mattered in the long run.

Eventually, years passed, and Blue Bell was then selected to the one job where she decided she'd take with some interest.

Man-Made Magical Girls. It seemed to pique her interest because it was different than her usual routine and her normal jobs.

Again, her hard-working nature made sure that the bosses up above agreed that she was the best for the job.

That's when she met Princess Deluge.

That's where she learned of Princess Deluge's origins.

Deluge was a lost soul, hurt, a shell of a girl. Based on what she said, it's clear that Deluge has lost everything. Her family, her friends, her normal life.

And then Blue Bell felt a spark.

Magical Girls are supposed to help people, right? This is what Magical Girls are supposed to do.

Unlike other people and other Magical Girls like Deluge, Deluge was unique. Because she was Man-Made, not many in the Land of Magic liked her on sight. The R&D Division also just wants to research her. Emotionally detached from Deluge, the person.

Which placed Blue Bell in the unique position of being the only one capable of befriending Deluge.

Suddenly faced with this kind of responsibility. The fact that a person's mental stability rests entirely on Blue Bell's hands.

She didn't feel like she was a worthless Magical Girl anymore.

She felt like she had a purpose.

Deluge was her answer. She was going to help her. That was the reason she became a Magical Girl. Everything in her life led up to this moment.

She wants to help Princess Deluge.

She wants to make Princess Deluge happy.

She wants to heal Princess Deluge from her old shell.

To that end, she was always there for Deluge. Always ready to do whatever it is Deluge needed. Always willing to talk with Deluge.

If Deluge was sad, or emotionless, then Blue Bell would give her one of her candies.

Some people confuse Blue Bell's lack of motivation with Blue Bell not wanting to be a Magical Girl. While she has wanted to quit before, this is untrue.

Blue Bell Candy *wants* to be a Magical Girl. It's just that she doesn't have any motivation or ambition when doing so.

Now, she's found it.

Whatever Deluge wanted, she'll give.

Whatever Deluge asked for, she'll seek out.

Sometimes, Deluge would ask her for something difficult. Something that she didn't know if she really should do.

It happened one day, and Blue Bell didn't know if she should do it or not.

But if it's for her, and if it really does help her like she claims, then Blue Bell will just have to leverage her resources to get those things.

It was hard for Blue Bell to get the things Deluge wanted. She was just another employee of the R&D Division.

But Blue Bell has worked here long enough to know where her bosses hide passwords and keys to their secret labs.

Afterwards, she gave Deluge what she wanted. All the information she needed. All the research required...

...And then Deluge caused chaos with that knowledge.

Did Deluge plan to use Blue Bell from the start? Or did Blue Bell just give Deluge too much freedom and too little restraint?

Either way, the Deluge she sees now is not the same Deluge she met before. She's no longer the lost shell of a child she once was. She's... changed.

Deluge has passed the point of no return. Does she realize this? Blue Bell knows this as a fact, and this was all Blue Bell's fault.

Too lenient, too careless.

...But she just wanted to do what's best for her.

Blue Bell had to stick by Deluge's side. If she's crossing over that edge, only Blue Bell could hope to bring her back.

Only Blue Bell understood the trauma that Deluge had gone through.

Deluge had been deceived. Her whole life as a Magical Girl was a complete lie.

Deluge's friends had been killed. The only people who understood and cared for her was gone.

The only one left to bring her back from that is Blue Bell. So Blue Bell had to dive into the abyss with her.

Without Blue Bell, Deluge would be lost in a world of chaos.

Blue Bell was Deluge's only hope now.

So she has to stay by her side, whether Deluge wants her to or not. She has to bring Deluge back.

Now, Deluge was like a hunter. Deluge was like a rabid dog. She wasn't supposed to end up like this.

Blue Bell had to bring her back.

Magical Girls are supposed to help people in distress, right? Well, Deluge is in need of help the most, and no other Magical Girl is willing to save her.

That's why...

...That's why Blue Bell has to save her.

## ☆ Princess Deluge

Deluge saw a Shufflin run away. She ran faster than the Shufflin. Fast enough that she managed to stab through the Shufflin before it could do anything.

But then... The Shufflin transformed.

It was no longer a Shufflin, but... It was Tempest.

Princess Tempest.

Deluge was shocked. She instantly removed her trident from Tempest's body. Tempest grabbed her stomach, blood pouring out of the wound.

She looked back at Deluge, her eyes filled with fear, sadness, confusion, as she collapsed and died in front of her.

A wave of Shufflins stampeded around Deluge. She looked around, and she saw a Spade soldier going for her.

Deluge was fast, her reflexes had been trained. She easily overpowered the Spade, but the Spade kept fighting and fighting.

If the Spade wouldn't give up, neither would Deluge.

She brought down her trident, and the Spade tried with all her might to block it with her spear. Deluge struggled, trying to bring the trident hard on the Spade.

And for a split second, the Spade's body changed to a red Magical Girl.

Princess Inferno, angrily guarding herself against Deluge's trident.

Deluge was caught off guard, and that moment of weakness was just enough for Inferno to push away Deluge and rush towards her.

She transformed back into a Spade, pushing Deluge back and charging at her, spear at the ready.

Deluge deflected the spear, and with a swift twirl, disarmed the Spade before violently stabbing it in the chest.



The Spade held Deluge's trident, as she began coughing blood.

But... it wasn't a Spade...

She transformed back into Inferno.

Princess Inferno's eyes were filled with hatred as she stared at Deluge. Filled with betrayal.

Deluge began sweating. She removed her trident from Inferno's body as she fell down towards the ground.

A Diamond tripped and fell. Deluge walked over to her. A Heart quickly went in front of Deluge, protecting the Diamond.

Deluge didn't care how durable the Heart was.

She stabbed the Heart in the chest, and she began to freeze the Heart's veins from the inside. Her face slowly beginning to become bluer and bluer.

Hearts was trying hard to hide their pain, but their internal organs were freezing and fracturing.

She had blood coming out of her mouth, and frozen chunks as well.

Then... the Hearts transformed.

...Princess Quake.

Quake? No, no...

Deluge removed her trident again. Quake fell on her knees, looking up at Deluge. Her eyes were sad, and her tears were frozen, as she collapsed and died from her wounds.

Deluge closed her eyes and shook her head. When she opened it, she saw a Heart's corpse.

She went over to the Diamond in the corner, and raised her trident.

The Diamond was shivering and cowering in fear. Then...

...The Diamond became Prism Cherry.

Her eyes screamed 'save me'. She didn't want to die.

*No, this isn't Cherry... Cherry was never a coward...*

Cherry came back, when she could've escaped, Cherry came back. Cherry came back and fought off the Shufflins.

Prism Cherry was a hero, and she died a hero's death. She sacrificed herself to save Deluge.

This Diamond was not Prism Cherry.

Deluge pierced her trident through the Diamond's head, freezing her brain, making it solid, then shattering it, as the Diamond twitched and fell lifelessly.

"Deluge..."

She heard a voice from behind. She turned around. No one was there.

"What are you doing, Deluge?"

More voices.

"You need to stop!"

"What are you doing?"

"You're out of control"

"What have you become, Deluge?"

The voices surrounded her.

*What am I doing?*

*What's going on?*

Her breathing became heavy, and her vision became narrow. Her head was light, and everything was a daze.

She looked around her, and she saw corpses. Shufflin corpses. When she first fought the Shufflin, whenever they restocked, their bodies would disappear. These ones didn't.

Were these ones permanent?

"Deluge!"

Deluge looked back, spear at the ready, and saw...

...Blue Bell Candy.

Not an illusion.

Deluge had originally come out here to find Premium Sachiko, but when she saw the Shufflin army, she went berserk.

But now, Blue Bell Candy has shown up, and many of the Shufflins have retreated.

"I told you not to follow me. It's too dangerous, Blue Bell," said Deluge.

"You're right. It is dangerous. You're endangering yourself," said Blue Bell.

"I can handle myself fine."

"No. No you can't, Deluge. I'm sorry, but you went too far..."

"Did you do this?"

"What?"

"Are you messing with my head? You don't have the right to do that. You don't mess with my head, and my emotions, unless I give you permission," said Deluge.

"Deluge... I'm sorry but... you're out of control."

"And you don't *know* me! I don't know what it is your magic can really do, but if it's making me slow in battle, *stop* ! You don't know what I've been through, not really. I've only told you stories, but you weren't there. You have no right to mess with my emotions!"

"I'm sorry... it's just... I didn't mean to..."

"...It's fine. But if you're going to get in my way again, you should go back home."

Deluge looked away from Blue Bell. She can't look into Blue Bell. It pains her to see Blue Bell's face.

After having seen the Pure Elements, Blue Bell being disappointed in her would be too much for Deluge.

Deluge really did care about Blue Bell. It's why it's best for Blue Bell not to get involved at all. Where she will go, Blue Bell won't like it.

Sometimes Deluge wished she didn't care about Blue Bell, but the truth is, Deluge had grown close to her. So close that she didn't want Blue Bell to end up like the Pure Elements.

But... in a way, Deluge was glad that Blue Bell was by her side.

She was picked up by a demon wing. Blue Bell also rode behind the demon. Both of them climbed aboard.

Deluge remembered the recordings she saw of the Pure Elements' last moments.

Princess Quake...

*"Hey, Tempest. Tempest, look at me, okay? It's gonna be okay, alright? Look at my face, look at me... Tempest. Don't worry. I'm not going to let anything happen, okay?"*

*"Quake... Quake, I'm scared... Quake I don't wanna die... Quake..."*

*"Off with her head!"*

*"QUAKE... NO, PLEASE... QUAKE DON'T..."*

*"Stay strong, okay? Tempest... Stay strong, okay?"*

Quake tried to comfort tempest, she went before Tempest. Joker then decapitated her anyways. To add salt to the wound, Tempest was also taken.

*"Please... I'm sorry, I'll be a good girl... Please, I don't wanna die..."*

*"Off with her head!"*

*"No... no, please, I'm sorry! I'm sorry!!!"*

Tempest cried and begged, but it fell on deaf ears. Joker mercilessly decapitated her as well.

Princess Inferno...

*“K-Koyuki... You’re the Magical Girl Hunter, right?”*

*“Akari, stay with me... You’re not dying on me”*

*“H-Hunt down... the bad guys, okay?”*

*“Akari... no, no, not again! Not again! AKARI!”*

Prism Cherry...

*“SHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!”*

*“H-Hang on! I’m gonna give you more light!”*

*“COME ON, YOU BASTARDS! HAAAAAH!”*

That’s why the Shufflins couldn’t be forgiven. They showed no compassion, and anyone that showed compassion to them would be killed.

Like Filuru.

When everything was said and done. When everyone was done fighting. A lone Shufflin stopped Deluge and Filuru.

Filuru decided to spare it, asking it to walk away. She had let her guard down, and when the Shufflin attacked, she sacrificed herself to save Deluge.

Kindness will only get you killed.

Everyone who died, they died because they showed compassion to the enemy.

Now’s not the time for compassion.

When everything was all over. When everyone is avenged. When everyone’s finally at peace. Only then, will Deluge consider compassion once more.

Only then will Deluge face any consequences her actions might have.

Until then, she threw compassion away. There was no room for it. Not here, not now.

Deluge remembered her old life.

Nami Aoki.

When she was younger, her friend had been bullied. Deluge didn't bother trying to help her, because she was afraid of being disliked by her other friends.

People that became close to the bullied friend were shunned by the others.

Deluge was someone that wanted friends. So much so that she didn't want to make anyone hate her.

If only she threw that away, the need for attention. If only she had focused on her bullied friend. Maybe she wouldn't have moved away.

Deluge shook her head. She couldn't think about that now.

Blue Bell watched Deluge with a worried expression. That's when Deluge felt something in her chest.

Pain.

Extreme pain.

Deluge grasped her chest. She felt nauseous. She felt like her chest was tightening up, going to kill her.

She began breathing heavily, coughing up small amounts of blood.

"Deluge! Are you okay? What's going on?" asked Blue Bell nervously.

"Medicine... Medicine, now! *Cough* "

Blue Bell took the medicine that Deluge always takes and gave it to her. Deluge ate the medicine, and she felt a bit better.

Her medicinal intake had increased from normal. She was consuming twice. No, thrice the amount of medicine as before.

She can still fight. She has to keep her body up to fighting conditions.

Until she finds Premium Sachiko.

No contacts from the Magical Girls she used. Deluge decided to use the demon army to scout the city.

She didn't want to rely on Pfl's minions. She's going to find Sachiko one way or another.

But she was also going to hunt down every last Shufflin in existence. If the Shufflins disappear, the Osk Faction loses power. That's win-win as well.

If she sees a Shufflin, she will kill her.

That's why Deluge wants Blue Bell to just go home. She doesn't belong in all this violence and chaos.

Blue Bell shouldn't be here.

Not together with someone like Deluge. Blue Bell was a nice, kind, caring person, who was loyal to her friends like no other.

What Deluge was about to do... Blue Bell shouldn't be associated with her.

"Blue Bell... You should really go home," said Deluge.

"I'm staying, Deluge."

"I don't think you understand. It's dangerous for you to be near me," said Deluge.

"I don't care. Thick and thin, I'm going to stand by your side. You're family, Deluge. Family sticks together, no matter what," said Blue Bell.

Deluge looked back, and who she saw wasn't Blue Bell Candy...

...It was the figure of Prism Cherry.

"I've got your back, no matter what happens, okay?" said Cherry, smiling at Deluge.

Deluge almost wanted to cry. That's why Cherry came back. She wanted to protect her. She wanted to protect what's left of her family.

Cherry never betrayed them. Cherry wasn't a coward. She was someone brave. She was a hero.

Deluge couldn't say no to her face.

She nodded and looked back forward. It seems like the demons had found something. The demons were surrounding a figure of a Magical Girl.

Deluge felt rage build up, but it slowly turned to curiosity, as she got a closer look at the Magical Girl.

Should she descend?

She had no choice. She descended downwards.

"Who's that?" asked Blue Bell.

Deluge didn't answer.

"Someone you know, Deluge?" asked Blue Bell again.

As she descended, Deluge saw the Magical Girl down there smiling calmly.

The Magical Girl with a Wheelchair, *Pfle* .

### ☆ **Monoshiri Mi-Chan**

Hiding behind the trees, Mi-Chan steadied herself. The demons that she had called for reinforcements had already been cut down.

All of them were killed by homing Shuriken and Kunai. Precise, and it didn't miss too.

Mi-Chan felt a stinging pain behind her neck. She pulled out a Kunai that was stuck there.

Her body was bruised, and many parts of her were bleeding. Luckily, the Shuriken and Kunai have yet to reach any vitals or broken any bones.

Still, she needs to switch up her game plan.

" *Gun -> Shotgun* "

Her rifle became a shotgun, changing the ammunition to supply for higher spread, at the cost of low range.



Mi-Chan couldn't die here. Her team needed her.

Glassianne, Dark Cutie, Deluge. They were all talented people. They knew how to defend themselves, but still... They needed Mi-Chan.

Glassianne was a scout, but she wouldn't know what to do with the information she gained.

Dark Cutie often acted on instincts rather than common sense.

And Deluge... Well, Deluge is Deluge. You really don't know *what* she's going to do. Mi-Chan still didn't fully trust her, nor did she trust Blue Bell Candy.

Meaning Mi-Chan needs to survive this. She's damn well going to survive this encounter, too.

Mi-Chan heard a rustle in the woods. The shadow of the ninja, running across the trees, throwing her Shuriken towards Mi-Chan.

*Blam!*

The spread of the shotgun blast destroyed the Shuriken, as well as some tree branches as well.

Now's her chance.

She ran as fast as she can across the open mountain road. She needed to go down the mountain path.

Then she felt a pain in her legs. The Shuriken and Kunai had hit her. She lost her balance and tumbled downwards.

She quickly turned around on her back. More Shuriken aimed at her head.

*Blam!*

*Blam!*

*Blam!*

She stood up, shotgun at the ready.

She looked at her surroundings. It was like a farmland field. There was some grass, an oil drum with smoke coming out of it, a truck, driverless, at the side of the road.

More Shuriken.

*Click*

*Shit...*

Out of ammo. Mi-Chan threw away the shotgun. She removed her white coat as well. She grabbed one end on her right arm, and another on her left, then she stretched it widely.

She allowed the Shuriken to hit the cloth. As long as their momentum was stopped, they wouldn't be able to hurt her. It doesn't matter if they hit a wall or a pillow.

The Shuriken that flew over to her began to change their flight patterns. Instead of flying in a flurry of three Shurikens lining up, they flew spread out. Near impossible for Mi-Chan to block with just her cloth.

She ripped up her cloth and stuffed it in her pocket, and ran as fast as she could across the trail.

She picked up some stone pebbles on the road, and made sure the Shuriken were all lined up. There was a whole flock of them flying towards her.

First wave.

Wait for it...

Wait for it...

Now!

*“ Pebble -> Panel ”*

The pebble she placed on the road turned into a large wooden panel, completely covering the road and tall enough to protect Mi-Chan.

She heard the thumping noises of Shuriken hitting the wooden panel she took cover over. She had a feeling it's not over.

Mi-Chan was right. More Shuriken passed through above the panels, making a boomerang-like trajectory to hit Mi-Chan from behind.

Plan B. Have to hit them one by one. Mi-Chan's fast, so she has the reflexes. She just needs a weapon that can both block and attack.

She grabbed the wooden panel,

*“ Lumber -> Cleaver ”*

The wooden panel shrunk into a cleaver knife. Mi-Chan deflected each Shuriken headed towards her, expertly cutting them apart. However, sometimes she's not fast enough, as there are many Shuriken.

The ones that passed through harmed Mi-Chan's elbows and shoulders. She resisted the pain, but focused on making sure nothing hits her vitals.

The ninja was on the other side of the mountain road, hidden in the trees, throwing multiple Shuriken and Kunai towards her.

Each time, Mi-Chan was able to maneuver her body so that the Shuriken would all line up perfectly for her cleaver to hit.

The ninja girl jumped down from the trees. Perhaps she was out of range?

She threw several Shuriken from down the ground, then she jumped and threw Shuriken from above. She then landed on some tree branches, jumped across the forests and threw Shuriken from there too.

She's planning a 360 attack, impossible to block with simple bladed weapons.

Mi-Chan needed a faster weapon.

*“ Hatchet -> Latchet. Latchet -> Lasso ”*

The cleaver she was holding turned into some shoelaces, which then turned further into a rope, that Mi-Chan could use as a lasso.

She began to twirl it around like a whip. She didn't need to catch the Shuriken. She just had to hit them once to swing their trajectory off.

*Slash!*

*Slash!*

*Slash!*

Mi-Chan whipped the rope around in a 360 angle, hitting any Shuriken coming close to her. Mi-Chan was experienced in many types of weaponry. She had to, with her versatility.

The Kunai and Shuriken wave kept coming, Mi-Chan struggled to keep up, and more of them began piercing her skin, even if she's catching all of them.

The problem is the ninja. She had to get the ninja. She was hiding somewhere in the forest, so Mi-Chan had to get close.

But Mi-Chan can't just run to the forest. The ninja will know for sure. Mi-Chan had to strike from somewhere the ninja couldn't see.

High in the sky.

First thing's first, she has to make sure none of the projectiles hit her. More Shuriken. Mi-Chan had to cover both the Shuriken and her ascent.

*“ Lasher -> Boulder ”*

She placed the rope on the ground, the rope then transformed into a tall gigantic boulder, blocking almost all of the Shuriken headed for Mi-Chan.

The boulder was tall enough that the ninja might not be able to get line of sight.

Mi-Chan theorized that she had to use line-of-sight. The Shuriken is obviously magic. Being half-blind means she has terrible depth perception, so she may just need line of sight to her target and just throw it randomly.

With the boulder covering Mi-Chan, now she can begin to fly.

She took out the last grenade she had. She also untied her necktie. She pulled the pin of the grenade with her mouth, and threw the grenade close by.

*“ Tie String -> Tight String . Tight String -> Kite String. Kite String -> Kite! ”*

Mi-Chan quickly climbed up the boulder, and when the grenade blew up, the force of the explosion propelled the kite upwards, and the wind

carried Mi-Chan up in the air.

The speed of Mi-Chan's ascent was enough that she was able to cover a large distance, headed towards the forested area where the ninja was hiding.

Soaring through the air, Mi-Chan breathed a sigh of relief.

Mi-Chan looked down. There was only one direction the Shuriken can attack from now.

She saw them!

Shuriken and Kunai were shooting up, coming from a certain area in the forest. Mi-Chan quickly made a mental note of where the general area they're being fired from was.

She had to land there.

*“ Wire -> Fire ”*

The kite string became fire on Mi-Chan's palm. She moved the fire towards her cap, as it burned in Mi-Chan's cap.

Without a kite, Mi-Chan was now in freefall, headed down to the forest. She aimed her trajectory towards the forest. Soon, she'll be face to face with the ninja.

But first she had to deal with the Shuriken shooting up towards her. Luckily, Mi-Chan was prepared.

She opened her palms, diving down, and had them face downwards. The large gusts of wind from the fall swept through her open palms.

*“ SQUALL -> WALL! ”*

She stretched her arms downwards, letting the gust of wind that passed hit her palms. That gust of wind became a large iron wall.

The wall covered all of Mi-Chan's descent, and the Shuriken and Kunai headed towards her didn't have time to change trajectories.

They were all stopped by the giant falling wall.

Mi-Chan also now has a large platform where she can get cover from attacks underneath. She positioned herself in a crouching position above the wall.

Like riding a crashing shield.

Mi-Chan felt her destination coming closer. No Shuriken or Kunai being thrown.

Mi-Chan aimed the wall downwards for a reason. Not only was it to shield her from projectiles thrown below her, but it also covered her from line of sight.

Mi-Chan's theory may have been true. If the ninja needed line of sight, Mi-Chan wasn't going to give it to her.

Her only hope was to fight her in close-quarters combat. Mi-Chan braced herself for impact, as the wall was about to crash land.

*CRASH!!!*

The wall landed straight in the middle of the forest. Mi-Chan jumped off on impact, and took out the ripped cloth that she stored in her pocket earlier.

Her objective was complete. She was within the trees. She infiltrated the ninja's hiding spot. Now to find the ninja.

Mi-Chan looked around for any signs of life, being careful not to attract unwanted attention. The crash would alert the ninja to Mi-Chan's location, not the other way around.

Mi-Chan kept an eye out...

...She focused her hearing.

*Rustle*

*Snap!*

Mi-Chan heard branches and twigs being stepped on. She held on tightly to the tattered cloth in her hands.

Then she saw her, fast as lightning, the ninja threw Shuriken straight at Mi-Chan, while also running towards her at blinding speed.

*She's fast*

*“ Rag -> Rod ”*

The tattered clothes on Mi-Chan's hands became wooden sticks, and Mi-Chan used them to block the oncoming Shuriken.

The Shuriken stuck itself to Mi-Chan's rod, and now she has a sharp weapon to defend herself.

The ninja however, was not just a long-range fighter it seems. She took out her Katana and she began attacking Mi-Chan in close range.

She was agile and quick, and Mi-Chan did her best to block the sword slashes, but Mi-Chan received a hit that tore through her coat, another that wounded her arm, and another that wounded her leg.

She would be able to block some of the ninja's sword strikes, but not all of them. The ninja was just too fast.

But Mi-Chan had her smarts. She had to disable the ninja's sight.

She waited for a chance to strike, when the Katana of the ninja came in once again for a swing, Mi-Chan locked blades with it.

Leverage is key. Mi-Chan had both hands, vs. the strength of the one-handed ninja. With the ninja's hand holding her Katana, she can't use her Shuriken.

Now's her chance. Time to blind her.

*“ Stick -> Stink ”*



Mi-Chan held her breath, and the wooden rod became a cloud of smoke, one that smelled horribly bad.

The ninja was taken aback, but Mi-Chan wasn't done yet.

*“ Stink -> Ink ”*

Mi-Chan waved her open palm across to the cloud of stench, and part of it became a black gooey substance, attaching itself to Mi-Chan's hand.

She punched the ninja in the face, and smeared black ink over her eye.

The ninja made no noise, but it's clear that she was in distress. She was trying to wipe the ink from her eye, shaking her head.

So she *does* need line-of-sight for her magic. No time to let her rest.

Mi-Chan grasped her palm on the cloud of stink.

*“ Stench -> Bench ”*

From there, a park bench manifested. Mi-Chan was grasping two of its four legs.

The ninja was disoriented, and Mi-Chan swung the bench hard on the ninja. The force of the impact sent the ninja flying towards a nearby tree, but also broke the bench in half.

Mi-Chan saw the ninja heavily bleeding and coughing blood, but she still tried to stand up, Katana at the ready.

*She's tough too.*

Mi-Chan had no weapon. The ninja was going to engage in close quarters again. Mi-Chan saw more of her ripped clothing from the swordfight earlier. But first, she needed to get rid of this half-bench.

*“ Shoddy bench -> Shoddy gun ”*

Mi-Chan's bench shrunk to a toy gun. She dived towards the ripped cloth, as the ninja got back on her feet and charged towards Mi-Chan.

*“ Rags -> Bags. Packs -> Ax! ”*

Mi-Chan turned her body around, now equipped with an ax. She blocked the ninja's sword strike.

Mi-Chan swept the ninja, but the ninja front-flipped away, kicking Mi-Chan's face, sending her tumbling down in the forest ground.

Blood was streaming down Mi-Chan's mouth, and if it weren't for her earpieces, it would've been leaking through her ears too.

The ninja began darting to Mi-Chan again. Mi-Chan couldn't hope to match her in close quarters. The ninja's too fast.

...So we *shouldn't* fight close-quarters.

Mi-Chan spat out blood.

“ *SHODDY GUN -> TOMMY GUN* ”

The Tommy Gun. A submachine gun. Used to be popular with American gangsters in the Prohibition. Normally, this gun needs to be held with two hands. The recoil would be unwieldy with one hand...

...For a human.

Mi-Chan isn't a human. Mi-Chan is a Magical Girl.

So handling a gun in one arm and an axe in another is not impossible at all. Not for someone of Mi-Chan's strength.

*Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!*

Bullets sprayed across the forest. The ninja wasn't prepared. Several bullets hit her torso, but she immediately stepped back.

She deflected most of the bullets with her Katana, and dodged away.

The submachine gun wasn't supposed to be used for long-range combat. It's effective range is medium range. It also discourages opponents from getting close.

Mi-Chan focused fire on the ninja's Katana. Despite being a Magical Girl, the force of the bullets was still being pitted against the force of a single Katana sword.

Mi-Chan hammered the trigger on the Tommy Gun, the sound of gunfire blazing across the woods.

The ninja dodged to the right.

She dodged over to the left.

Mi-Chan was fast, anticipating her moves, forcing her to deflect with her Katana. Sure enough, with the force Mi-Chan exerted, the ninja's Katana was blown away, launched straight into the air.

The ninja, now hands free, began to backflip away to the trees again. She was going to try to do long-range tactics.

*Oh no you don't!*

The fire. The small fire that was still in Mi-Chan's cap was still burning. She placed her hand on the flames.

*" Fire -> Lather. Soap -> Rope! "*

The fire turned into a bubbly substance, and the bubbly substance turned into a pile of rope. One that Mi-Chan used as a lasso.

She twirled it, and caught the ninja mid-flight. The rope that she used was launched and used to wrap around the ninja's leg. She pulled on the rope, and slammed the ninja through tree branches, down to the ground.

Mi-Chan began pulling the rope, dragging the ninja towards her. But the ninja also pulled on the rope using her leg, shifting Mi-Chan's balance apart.

Mi-Chan fell down, and the ninja was quick to react, stomping the foot with the knot down on Mi-Chan's chest, pinning her down.

The ninja pulled out a small shortsword. Wakizashi. Different from the Katana she had before.

She brought it down to Mi-Chan's head, but Mi-Chan was faster. With one arm she held it firm, and with the other arm...

...She grabbed hold of the knot of rope in the ninja's leg.

*" Knot -> Knife "*

The knot turned into a knife, and Mi-Chan spared no time in stabbing it towards the ninja's leg.

The ninja screamed in pain, and Mi-Chan took this advantage to push forward, kicking the ninja off of her.

Mi-Chan gripped the ax, and ran towards the ninja, but the ninja was fast, and immediately, she deflected Mi-Chan's strikes with her shortsword.

The ninja knee'd Mi-Chan, and continued her onslaught, Mi-Chan trying desperately to hold on and fight back.

With the shortsword, the ninja became a lot faster. The weight of a shortsword was lighter than the Katana, and the ninja was already fast to begin with.

Mi-Chan had no choice.

The next blow from the ninja wasn't deflected with Mi-Chan's hand ax, but instead caught with Mi-Chan's right arm.

The blade cut Mi-Chan's palm, but Mi-Chan held on, blood pouring through it. She gritted her teeth, stopping the blade and locking the ninja in her spot.

*“ Sword -> Board! ”*

The ninja's eyes widened in shock. No one was prepared for their weapon to change before their very eyes.

The change was sudden too. The wooden board had a different length than the sword, so the ninja's sense of balance was disturbed.

Mi-Chan pulled on the ninja's red scarf, headbutting the ninja, and cutting off her wooden board with the ax that she held.

Mi-Chan then swung her ax, but the ninja did the most unexpected thing. She blocked it with her right arm, gritting her teeth but not screaming in pain.

Mi-Chan punched the ninja in the stomach, and with the grip on the ninja's scarf, she threw the ninja away, pulling the ax back. The ninja

tumbled across the ground, and Mi-Chan walked over to finish the job.

When she got close, however, the ninja held the wooden block, or what remained of it, in her right hand, and swung it fast towards Mi-Chan.

Instinctively, Mi-Chan blocked with her right arm. The backhand swing of the ninja was hard, and Mi-Chan had forgotten that her right arm had only recently healed.

It broke before in the Amusement Park. It was still recovering, which means...

Pain shot up through Mi-Chan's right arm, as a wooden smash was heard. Bits and pieces of the wooden block flew off, and Mi-Chan's head felt dizzy.

She looked down at her arm. Blood... And her bone was sticking out... That explains the pain.

She numbed the pain in her head. The ninja was also in pain from the ax wound. Mi-Chan dodged the ninja's punches, and she bit the axe between her mouth, grabbing the ninja's scarf, taking her down by pulling it violently downwards. The ninja landed face first on the ground.

The ninja was pinned. Mi-Chan kicked the ninja in the torso, rolling over the ninja's prone and bruised body.

When Mi-Chan got on top of the ninja's body, pinning her down, she only had a split second to realize that the ninja was hiding something in her mouth.

The ninja spit it out, and Mi-Chan felt a sharp sting in her forehead.

The ninja had spit out a Kunai, hidden in her mouth. Mi-Chan's head became even more dizzy and confused.

Her ears started to ring. Too stunned to speak.

The ninja grabbed Mi-Chan by the collar, and she began headbutting the Kunai stuck in Mi-Chan's forehead further in.

*One.*

*Two.*

*Three.*

Three hits, and Mi-Chan stumbled backwards. The wound could be resisted. Mi-Chan is a Magical Girl, and willpower helps in any battle.

But she's losing a lot of blood.

Her body is getting weaker. Mi-Chan fell to her back. She grabbed her ax, biting it in her mouth again, and used her free hand to pull out the Kunai, gripping it in her left arm.

The ninja rose up while coughing out blood. She climbed on top of Mi-Chan's body. She gripped her fists, but Mi-Chan was faster.

Mi-Chan struck the Kunai she held on the ninja's leg, and when the ninja reacted, Mi-Chan grabbed the ninja's red scarf, intending to pull her neck closer to the ax on Mi-Chan's mouth.

The ninja resisted, trying to pull away, Mi-Chan also tried to pull her in as well. The two powers were locked in. The ninja grabbed hold of Mi-Chan's left arm.

Both fighters only had one arm left to use. The ninja rolled away, bringing Mi-Chan along with her. Mi-Chan had to get the upper hand here.

She leveraged her body until she was the one who was pinning the ninja.

She took out the ax, now filled with blood, sweat, and saliva. She gripped it tightly in her left arm. She lifted it up-

...She felt pain in her body.

Her grip released. Mi-Chan let go of the ax. She coughed up blood.

*What happened?*

She looked down. Her scholar's uniform, once white, was now drenched red with blood.

Sticking out of her stomach, was a Katana. A Katana that fell from above.

*This Katana...*

Mi-Chan thought that she disarmed the ninja before...

...Oh, now it makes sense.

The ninja's powers isn't limited to Shuriken and Kunai. When Mi-Chan shot and disarmed the ninja...

...she had already launched her Katana up in the air.

The rest of the fight was a distraction. The Katana was the real threat all along. She had deceived Mi-Chan. The ninja had outwitted her.

The ninja violently pulled out the Katana from Mi-Chan's back. Mi-Chan lost power to her body, falling backwards.

*...Sh... Shit...*

The ninja looked down on Mi-Chan's body. The world seemed to slow down, as the ninja raised her arm, Katana pointed down, and pierced it down repeatedly.

## ☆ **Fal**

From alley to alley, the three girls ran as fast as they can. Snow White was in the lead, with Sachiko in the middle, and Uluru covering their backs.

"Magical Girl detected! Somewhere around this corner, Pon!"

Snow White looked back at Uluru. The two nodded. Uluru focused behind them, crouching down and having her gun ready.

Snow White equipped Ruler, and she peered across the corner

A demon charged towards her, ready to strike. Snow White was prepared. She used the momentum of the demon to predict when it'll come, and attack with her halberd as soon as it came close.

However, the demon also had a chance to react. Instantly, it transformed its wings into a hard shield, blocking Snow White's stabs and slashes.

They were forced to retreat.

The demon pursued them, Snow White stood her ground, though she did retreat for a bit to gain a better fighting advantage.

*BLAM!*

The sound of a gunshot deafened the alley. Everyone, including the demon, was stunned.

That moment of hesitation was all Snow White needed to cut down the demon with her halberd. She moved fast, slicing it in half. The demon broke apart.

But Fal's radar still wasn't over.

Snow White led the sisters further into the maze of alleys.

Snow White sensed someone running after her, the shadows seemingly playing with their mind. They saw glimpses of a figure darting across the alleyways.

Before they got any farther, their path was blocked by a Magical Girl who landed from above.

A dark-suited Magical Girl. The same Magical Girl that fought Snow White back in the amusement park a while ago.

*Dark Cutie .*

Sachiko screamed. She ran the opposite direction. Snow White looked around, and Sachiko was already speeding past Uluru.

But then Sachiko stopped, and fell backwards, giving out a small yelp. Snow White realized what it was. On the alley wall was the shadow of a hound dog.

The shadow was barking, and making noises like a real dog, even though it's just a 2D shadow.



It opened its mouth to reveal its fangs, and ran towards Sachiko. So that's how Dark Cutie tracked them. The hound dog, despite being a shadow, was very much real. Their sense of smell was incredible, and they've probably been following them since the amusement park.

And they couldn't even see it because they wouldn't know to look for a shadow. Shadows also don't have thoughts, so Snow White wouldn't be able to detect it. Shadows are not Magical Girls, so Fal's radar wouldn't catch it.

It's the perfect infiltrator.

The shadow hound tried to bite Sachiko, and Sachiko jumped away, trying desperately to avoid it. Her feet and shadow were dangerously close to the hound dog.

Uluru went in front of Sachiko, trying her best to block her from the shadow dog. The dog's fangs took hold of Uluru's guns, and the two wrestled with each other on it.

The shadows. They may not be physically in the 3D plane but they *are* real. Meaning shadows can interact with other shadows.

When Snow White saw this, she made sure to cut down the shadow hound, instead of aiming for it using her real halberd, she cut it down using her shadow halberd. The shadow hound was decapitated, and the shadow melted away.

Dark Cutie moved silently.

She lunged towards Sachiko, but she was stopped by a halberd blocking her path.

Snow White launched her towards a wall. Dark Cutie began avoiding Snow White's attacks. No matter what happened, Dark Cutie isn't getting to Sachiko.

Snow White was locked in combat with Dark Cutie, the two trading blows. She motioned for Uluru and Sachiko to retreat, and the two sisters passed by the two Magical Girls fighting each other.

They ran as fast as possible.

Dark Cutie retreated above. Snow White darted towards the sisters. Dark Cutie landed in front of the sisters.

Snow White jumped over the sisters, swinging her halberd down. It was caught by Dark Cutie before it could even cut her.

“STOP MOVING OR YOU’LL DIE!” shouted Uluru.

Snow White managed to ignore Uluru’s magic, countering it with her own.

But Dark Cutie didn’t stop. She didn’t seem to care. It’s as if she couldn’t hear her.

Dark Cutie moved her arms, in the shadows, she created shadows of spears and whips. They were elongated due to the sunset behind her.

The sunset!

It was giving an advantage to Dark Cutie, elongating all the shadows she’s creating.

Snow White realized the danger, urging for Sachiko and Uluru to stay behind her.

The spears and whips moved to attack Snow White. She tried to defend against them, but shadows don’t work like reality. They can bend. The whips lashed Snow White’s face, the spears pierced through her legs. Snow White’s eyes widened, blood was dripping down her dress.

Snow White took all the attacks, trying to attack Dark Cutie as well, but Dark Cutie’s spears and whips didn’t stop.

Every blow caused Snow White to be wounded. Avoiding the shadows was harder than dodging an attack in real life.

Snow White was coughing blood, her breathing was getting heavy, but she won’t let Dark Cutie pass through her. Dark Cutie continued her onslaught, but despite the wounds that Snow White endured, she won’t let Dark Cutie get to Sachiko.

“ *Huff...* Uluru... Sachiko... RUN!”

Snow White was weakened. She shook her head to focus her eyes, but the whips kept attacking. The whip grabbed Snow White by the neck, choking her. Dark Cutie then threw her towards a wall.

Uluru grabbed Sachiko’s hand and bolted away.

When Dark Cutie moved to pursue, Snow White restrained her from behind with her halberd.

There was blood all over Snow White’s face, stab wounds and lacerations across her body, but still she kept going. Her face was that of pure determination, as she struggled against Dark Cutie’s strength.

Dark Cutie must have earplugs on. The ones that prevent her from hearing Uluru’s words. But as a side effect, it allowed Snow White to get the jump on her.

Snow White pinned Dark Cutie towards a wall, locking her down with her halberd. With her fist, Snow White punched Dark Cutie repeatedly.

Each hit that Snow White did was meant to end the fight. Each punch that she delivered had the weight to knock out anyone. but Dark Cutie had incredible endurance.

Dark Cutie moved to attack Snow White with her shadows, but Snow White sensed it, released Dark Cutie, and jumped backwards.

Snow White’s movements were dulled, she gritted her teeth, holding her hand on one of her wounds. Uluru and Sachiko were long gone, and Snow White had achieved her objective of distracting Dark Cutie.

Snow White kicked the wall, and jumped up high, grabbing the ledge of the window, and kicked the wall again. She climbed up towards the rooftop.

Dark Cutie created a shadow rope, and like a grappling hook, she threw it across to the rooftop, following Snow White.

The new demons she had were upgraded models.

These ones were far better than what she's seen before, when she first considered the Disruptors.

The new models were able to fly well, and Deluge felt the rush of air as the demon she was riding on zoomed out high in the sky.

This wasn't the first time she flew either. Not even after the incident.

Deluge remembered when she was still a new Magical Girl. She remembered when she was just introduced to the Pure Elements. Not a few days after that, Princess Tempest had wanted to show her something.

*"C'mon, I'll show ya! Come outside and see!" said Tempest.*

*Deluge rolled her eyes, "Okaay, whatever it is, I hope it's worth it, Tempest."*

*Tempest snickered. She opened the door to the base, and she flew up. Deluge walked calmly outside.*

*She looked around.*

*"Well? What is it, Tempest?" asked Deluge.*

*"HOLD ON TIGHT!" said Tempest as she tackled Deluge from behind, grabbing on to her arms and flying away.*

*"WHOA TEMPEST WHOAAA..."*

Deluge remembered feeling scared on the first attempt, but as she soared through the sky, she understood why Tempest felt so free in the air.

Tempest smiled all the time when she carried Deluge across the skies. Eventually, Deluge learned to enjoy the ride, getting a bit jealous of Tempest's ability to fly.

After each ride, they went back home. Deluge always remembered Inferno greeting them back home.

*“Man, Deluge. You’re really adaptable, y’know? You’re super calm in almost any situation,” said Inferno.*

Deluge knew that wasn’t true.

Deluge knew that was far from the truth. Especially now.

She didn’t want to remember that. They were good memories, and she’d always remember it, but she didn’t want to right now.

Deluge flew down from the demon wings, but she didn’t wait. She jumped off, falling through the wind and clouds. Not that it would bother her. Deluge is immune to cold weather and icy things.

She landed on the streets below.

Deluge’s collaborators, and by extension, Pfle, were not someone she trusted.

With their line of work, she knew they were a group of liars and conspirators. There was no reason to believe anything they say.

After all, would you believe someone whose way of telling you information was by giving you files and papers for you to read at home?

Deluge only believed in their fighting ability, and their efficiency. Deluge needed that, but that’s the only extent. They weren’t partners, they were tools.

Deluge was sure that they knew what she was thinking as well. All the more reason not to trust them, as they may easily mislead her.

Perhaps they also don’t truly care about each other, not on a sentimental level. Bounty hunters like them have a dirty job to do, and sentiment is never a good thing in those kinds of jobs.

Deluge will only work together with them so long as they remain useful to her cause.

Unless Deluge sees the information and facts themselves, and not through a piece of paper, or a recording, or text, Deluge had no reason to

believe any of their information.

That doesn't just include her collaborators, but almost everything she's read or heard.

Grim Heart and Shufflin's fate.

Everything she knows about the Three Sages.

The ritual that was supposedly happening.

Ever since she was tricked on the true purpose of Magical Girls. When her whole family was deceived, she wouldn't believe anyone on words alone.

But there is one thing she still hasn't figured out.

Pfle.

She was a mystery to her. Her actions seemed to have some ulterior motive, but Deluge doesn't know what.

That's why she didn't trust her.

However, she always felt in control when meeting Pfle.

Deluge was stronger.

Deluge was faster.

Deluge was tougher.

If we're talking appearances, Pfle didn't threaten Deluge at all.

Pfle came to W-City by herself, without notifying Deluge, expecting to meet Deluge? That's completely suspicious.

"My my, it seems you're taking some rather strange actions. I thought you were supposed to be looking for Premium Sachiko," said Pfle.

"Do you realize your position right now? You're not in any position to tell me what to do," said Deluge.

"It's exactly because of my position that I came here in the hopes of helping you. If I just stay put at my mansion, it's not going to get done faster, after all."

“Neither will personally helping me.”

“Tell me something, Deluge. Why *do* you want Premium Sachiko?” asked Pfle.

“I have my reasons.”

“And here we go again. I can’t understand what your endgame is, so I don’t know how best to assist you.”

“Capturing Premium Sachiko weakens the Osk Faction. Anything that weakens the Osk Faction is something worth pursuing to me,” said Deluge.

“Well... I’ll leave the Sage fighting to you. One more question I’d like to ask,” said Pfle with a gentle smile.

Deluge didn’t like that.

“Shadow Gale. Is she safe? Would you check on her for me?” asked Pfle.

“She’s fine.”

“Then would you kindly return her, please?” asked Pfle.

What is this request? Is it a trap? Did she free Shadow Gale already? A bluff?

“If you think you’re going to trick me, you won’t,” said Deluge.

“It’s not a trick. I’m genuinely concerned for her safety, Deluge. She’s important to you because you need her to control me. She’s important to me for my own personal reasons,” said Pfle with a cold stare.

Deluge glared back at Pfle.

“Deluge. You can think of me in any way you want. I don’t care. My concern is Shadow Gale’s safety. The bounty hunters you hired from me are contracted to you. I won’t hold back on that deal. However, with Shadow Gale back, you’ll be rid of me for good,” said Pfle.

Her offer seems good. Deluge didn’t want the Human Resources Magical Girl to be connected to her.

She has contacts, and she could easily track her down if she tried.

However, at the same time, the leverage was good for Deluge. So she really didn't know if there was more to be gained from being rid of Pfler, or more to be gained from keeping her on a leash.

"Deluge! Is everything okay?"

She heard a voice from behind her. Floating softly downwards from one of the demons was Blue Bell.

"I'm fine," replied Deluge.

Blue Bell ran up next to Deluge.

"Good evening. My name is Blue Bell Candy. I'm a friend of Deluge," she said while bowing down.

"Ah, a pleasure. I'm also a friend of Deluge," said Pfler with a soft smile.

As the two continued talking, Deluge had a thought. Is Shadow Gale still in the warehouse? Deluge had made sure that she had enough security there.

Demons as well as Armor Arlie to ensure no rescue party could touch her.

Deluge took out her Magical Phone. She contacted the number for her hidden warehouse. She waited for a while.

...No answer?

Impossible. There were many people there.

Did Pfler...

Deluge looked over at Pfler, who was smiling and chatting with Blue Bell. Deluge tried to contact again.

No answer. Again she called, but there was still no answer.

Deluge felt sick in her stomach. She was stressed. She had to find out what happened.

"Blue Bell, I need candy," said Deluge.



The two Magical Girls were interrupted and looked at Deluge.

Blue Bell was slightly startled. But then she produced one of her candies again.

“Huh? Oh, okay,” said Blue Bell.

Deluge ate the candy. She needed to calm down. She needed to think straight again.

“I’m going,” said Deluge.

“What? Where are you going? I’ll come along,” said Blue Bell, rushing to Deluge’s side once more.

“No. Stay here. Watch that Magical Girl. Don’t listen to anything she says, and don’t give her anything at all,” said Deluge.

“Hey, Deluge... That’s a little harsh, isn’t it? What’s going on?” asked Blue Bell.

“If you need me, you know my number,” said Deluge, walking away.

Originally, Deluge didn’t want to have to use Blue Bell at all. She wanted Blue Bell to stay home. But there’s no time for Blue Bell to go home.

Blue Bell could watch over Pfler, and Deluge will check back on Shadow Gale.

There’s no way that Shadow Gale’s location could’ve been compromised. Had Pfler known? Was there some way of her finding out? Did she send a sneak attack? A raiding party?

Even so, the security that Deluge placed in the warehouse was supposed to be safe.

Not only were there demons, but there were three other Magical Girls. Armor Arlie and the other two.

They shouldn’t be easily defeated. Still, there was always that chance.

Deluge climbed up to the demon wings, and she flew away, soaring above the clouds once more, only she wasn’t doing it for fun anymore.

Not like those old days.

Deluge descended. She saw the warehouse building in the distance.

What happened there? Did Pflé sabotage it? Is Armor Arlie and the others okay? Is Shadow Gale still there?

Deluge and the demon flew faster. She took a gulp of her medicine, and prepared for the worst.

### ☆ **Glassianne**

Monoshiri Mi-Chan has been killed.

Mi-Chan died because she was hit by an unexpected opponent. Considering how unprepared she was, she fought bravely and resourcefully.

Glassianne never wanted to think about that possibility, but she was only fooling herself. In a job like this, there was always the possibility of them dying. No matter how small. It just comes with the job description.

But even so, it still feels so unnatural. Mi-Chan is dead, and Glassianne still hasn't fully accepted that it's happened.

Glassianne looked calm on the outside. She's a professional, of course she'd be calm no matter what happened.

But inside, her mind was floating. She was thinking of Mi-Chan, she couldn't concentrate on anything else.

She sighed out loud, noticing that she's only distracting herself.

Glassianne saw the whole fight but was unable to provide assistance. She couldn't find the ninja in the forest, she was too fast. She couldn't provide assistance to Mi-Chan on the field, Glassianne couldn't fight as well as the others.

She couldn't even fulfill her own role as a scout.

The ninja disappeared just as fast as she appeared after killing Mi-Chan.

Mi-Chan wasn't even supposed to be there. Deluge was supposed to be doing this kind of work. Where *is* she? She hired them, she was the one that told them to find Premium Sachiko. The one that was doing all the legwork is Mi-Chan.

Now Mi-Chan's dead, because Deluge didn't even want to cooperate with her own team.

Deluge was the one who diverted course from the original plan to massacre some Shufflins. By the time Deluge had finished, the game was over, and Sachiko escaped.

Glassianne removed her glasses. She rubbed her forehead. All these emotions were still welling up inside of her.

She placed her glasses back in her face.

Turning on the intercom in her ear, she wanted to inform Dark Cutie. She wanted to tell her that Mi-Chan has passed.

But then, she decided against it.

Right now, Dark Cutie was busy fighting Snow White. It would be bad to ruin her focus in a deadly battle like this.

Premium Sachiko has escaped again, and Glassianne's team was dwindling even further.

But now Glassianne had to fill in Mi-Chan's shoes.

Dark Cutie can sometimes lose her cool, lose her judgement, and act alone. Usually, Mi-Chan was the one who handled that.

Her logic, and her words were respected by Dark Cutie. Dark Cutie may be the leader, but the true voice of the team was always Mi-Chan.

Glassianne is no substitute for that. How could she hope to fill in such large shoes like that?

*So what do I do?*

She had no choice but to keep doing what she does best. Scouting, and searching. After all, that's her specialty.

On the team, that's her role, her purpose.

She's not as good at any other thing. After all, a specialist isn't a generalist.

What was she going to write in her report? What was she going to tell Dark Cutie? 'Monoshiri Mi-Chan has died'?

Glassianne shook her head. She had to inform someone. She had to stick to the plan. Mi-Chan would've done that.

She turned on the intercom, contacting Deluge.

"Hello? Deluge? This is Glassianne. We've lost Premium Sachiko again, but Dark Cutie is currently engaging Snow White in W-City. I can send you the location as well. If we want to capture Sachiko, we need your support. Raise the alert levels, send the demons. Dark Cutie's going to need every help you can muster."

Glassianne paused for a bit.

"Also... I have bad news. Mi-Chan's died. She's gone. She was fighting some kind of ninja Magical Girl in the mountainside forest."

"Monoshiri Mi-Chan's dead? Hmm..." replied Deluge.

Her voice seemed so off-putting. Glassianne almost wanted to punch something. It's clear that there wasn't any compassion between them, but Mi-Chan was still Glassianne's friend.

Another call came from Glassianne's intercom. She'd connected it with her Magical Phone, in order to be hands free.

"...Hello?" answered Glassianne.

"Glassianne? Is that you? Could you speak up a bit louder," said the voice of Pfl.

"Boss? What's wrong?"

"I'm currently in W-City after meeting with Deluge."

Glassianne instantly switched channels in her glasses. She switched multiple times before finding Pfle sitting by a river. Glassianne zoomed in. Sure enough, it really was her.

“There’s been a change of plans, Glassianne,” said Pfle.

“What do you mean?”

“We won’t need to capture Premium Sachiko anymore. Withdraw. I’ll meet you at the usual place. Tell Dark Cutie as well,” said Pfle.

A withdrawal? So the mission was over? Then what was the point of all this? Did Mi-Chan die for nothing?

Glassianne took a deep breath. She was praying that wherever Mi-Chan was. Heaven or hell, she’d be watching over her, and forgiving Glassianne for getting her killed.

## ☆ **Dark Cutie**

If Dark Cutie was following her orders, she would have followed Premium Sachiko, and skipped over Snow White completely.

However, she didn’t. Instead, she followed Snow White on top of the roof.

Snow White seemed to want to distract her. An invitation to fight. Dark Cutie could sense that. Yet, despite knowing that, she was attracted.

The White Magical Girl.

Her name was suited for her. Snow White. A clean and beautiful name for a clean and beautiful looking Magical Girl.

A name fitting for a main character.

However, her nickname betrays her given name. She was given the nickname of The Magical Girl Hunter.

Magical Girl Hunter...

...Sounds like a nickname for a villain rather than a hero.

However, the name wasn't wrong. Indeed, Dark Cutie has heard of the Magical Girl Hunter's exploits. She goes around the world, in search of rogue Magical Girls. Hunting them down and defeating them.

She defeats villains, and is efficient in doing so. This makes her a hero.

She belongs to the Examination Division. Some other Magical Girls in the Land of Magic even say that she's the Ace of the Examination Division.

She has many flowers scattered around her outfit. It was beautiful and pure, the blooming white flowers matching her name.

Her outfit was that of a middle schooler. The armband she wore was that of a chairman. In fact, it looked like she was the head of the Student Council.

Again, fitting for a hero.

Punishing evil, a fine choice for her way of life. When Dark Cutie reached the rooftops, she took a moment to look at Snow White.

She had her halberd out, pointed downwards. She was breathing heavily, blood was all over her, and she was lightly wobbling from exhaustion.

Even so, she was willing to stand her ground. To fight for the safety of Sachiko.

What is her expression?

It's not that of anger.

It's not that of joy.

It's not that of sadness either.

In fact, it looks very calm. It seems like she's at peace with what's going on. Quiet, accepting, mentally prepared.

That doesn't seem right. A main character shouldn't be like that. A main character is the most emotional of all the characters in a show.

Shouldn't she be angry that there's a villain standing in front of her?

Shouldn't she be happy that she will be able to fight evil?

Shouldn't she be sad that she's forced to fight another Magical Girl?

She shouldn't hide her emotions behind a mask like that. It's not befitting of her. It's not befitting of a main character.

This is what Dark Cutie thought.

A villain behaves like a villain. A villain fights like a villain. A hero should do the same.

Pressed for time. No time to worry about the small things. The fight begins.

With her right hand, she made a hound dog. With her left hand, she made a fox. She ordered the shadows to attack Snow White.

It didn't matter if Snow White read her mind. She only gave vague commands to the shadow beasts. Snow White pays attention to detail. The vaguer your plan is, the less she'll understand.

Snow White kicked the fox away, and sliced the hound dog with her halberd, fighting with her shadow. She's learned as well.

Dark Cutie made a whip shadow using her leg, and launched it towards Snow White.

Snow White saw the attack coming and jumped backwards. However, this whip was never supposed to hurt Snow White.

The purpose of that whip was as a distraction.

Now, the fox had free reign to bite Snow White again, and the wolf was also lunging at Snow White.

She pointed the handle of her halberd at the wolf, who bit it and pulled it away to her left, stretching her body and exposing her right leg to the fox.

When the fox came over to bite Snow White's leg, however...

*CLANG!*

Dark Cutie heard a metal noise. Snow White was fast, using her free hand to grab something from her 4D bag and to slam the fox away. All

while holding onto her halberd, struggling with the wolf's shadow.

But what did she have on her left hand? A weapon? Did she prepare it beforehand? Did she anticipate her halberd would be taken?

Dark Cutie didn't remember Snow White ever brandishing such a weapon back in the amusement park, nor did she read anything about the Magical Girl Hunter having any other weapon than her halberd.

So what kind of weapon did she have? Dark Cutie saw the weapon. The weapon that slammed the fox beast away. That weapon was...

...A *Fire Extinguisher* !?

...Wait, what!?

Snow White placed the fire extinguisher on the ground, jumped on top of it, and pushed her body to the sky, lifting the halberd with her.

The wolf shadow followed it, naturally, still biting on the halberd.

In the sky, Snow White was twirling around sideways, moving her halberd in motion with her. The motion of the halberd caused the wolf to lose its grip, and soon, the halberd sliced off the shadow wolf's head as it melted.

Snow White gracefully landed down, grabbed her hand on the fire extinguisher, and slammed the concrete rooftop below her, creating a crack between the fox shadow and Snow White.

The stunned fox shadow was then stabbed by Snow White's halberd.

Dark Cutie saw her chance. She launched the whip towards Snow White, but Snow White released the fire extinguisher, and instinctively grabbed hold of the shadow whip.

She pulled on it, Dark Cutie was clever enough not to get pulled in, instead releasing the whip. Unfortunately, that means she was disarmed.

Now, Snow White has the fox stabbed with the halberd. She grabbed the fire extinguisher, and slammed it onto the fox's head.



The fox melted away, and she quickly got back into a battle stance, her breathing still as heavy as before.

She twirled the halberd on one hand, and fire extinguisher on the other, ready to face off against Dark Cutie.

*Amazing...*

*...That was... Completely amazing!*

*...But can you handle this, Snow White?*

Dark Cutie smiled. She positioned herself like a ballerina. With each limb, she created a different shadow.

On her right hand, a snake.

On her left hand, a wolf.

On her right foot, a whip.

On her left foot, a sickle.

She stood on one foot, on her toes, like a ballerina, and twirled around, controlling all the shadows at once.

4-on-1 Snow White.

The snake is poisonous.

The wolf and the sickle will attack from both sides.

The whip will distract her.

The wolf opened its jaws to snap at Snow White, and the snake as well. Snow White pointed the fire extinguisher towards the snake, and the snake bit the fire extinguisher instead.

She then jumped and performed a backflip, avoiding the wolf's lunge.

The jump also moved her back from the range of Dark Cutie's whip.

Next, the sickle was deflected using her halberd. Blocking and dodging all four attacks. Not bad, hero!

Still enough room for one more shadow.

By rotating her neck a bit, Dark Cutie made a cat's shadow. It lunged forward as well, towards Snow White.

Snow White expertly dodged all of them, moving gracefully. Concrete and debris were flying everywhere in the rooftops, the protective fences were destroyed.

Snow White was flipping around, dodging, using both concrete, cracks, her halberd, her fire extinguisher.

She used everything at her disposal. She was sweating as she moved and reacted faster than before. Not a single scratch on her.

In the sunset, holding her halberd, battle-hardened, bloodied, a survivor, a hero...

Dark Cutie did something she didn't think she'd do.

Something that she hasn't felt in a long time.

Dark Cutie laughed.

For the first time, she felt happy. For the first time, she thought she found someone worth fighting.

Dark Cutie turned her right hand into scissors, and she cut off the cat-like buds on the top of her head.

With that, the hair that she lumped up was released.

Most people assume Dark Cutie has short hair. Not so. She actually has long hair, covered up by those hair clumps.

She used the scissor shadow to cut off parts of her hair. She then used the hair strands to create even more shadow beasts to attack Snow White.

Snow White was now going up against more shadows than she could handle. She was dodging, jumping, and rolling around. She wasn't fighting back.

It was too much for her as well. No matter how much she can read, there were too many enemies.

Sometimes she'd receive damage or scratches to her body. Sometimes she'd misstep. Her breathing was so rough that she's almost tiring herself out.

But she avoided any fatal blows. She was focused on surviving first and foremost.

She'd take damage, but she'd shrug it off. She'd get bitten, but she'd just grit her teeth and continue fighting.

Snow White was trying to buy time for Premium Sachiko to escape, even at the cost of her own strength and health.

Dark Cutie stomped on the roof, and grabbed the concrete piece of rubble. Using her hair, she also attached it in a long string. She created a shadow of a hammer.

She charged at Snow White, and Snow White darted backwards, jumping towards the fence at the edge of the building.

What's her plan?

Dark Cutie created a rope with her shadows, and swung at the fence, jumping at high speed and lunging towards her. Snow White jumped off above Dark Cutie, and rolled forward.

When Dark Cutie realized she missed Snow White, she turned around, lunging again.

But Snow White's hands were already on the nozzle of the fire extinguisher.

Dark Cutie's momentum was too fast. Snow White had her halberd on her right hand, and on her left was the fire extinguisher.

With determined eyes, she clicked the fire extinguisher, and huge white foam shot from the extinguisher.

Dark Cutie covered her eyes, but the white foam covered her entire body.

Snow White spread the foam everywhere throughout the rooftops. Dark Cutie felt a hit with Snow White's halberd connecting to her head. The

shaft of the halberd was used to knock Dark Cutie away.

Her head rang, but she was otherwise fine.

She couldn't see. The air was covered in white mist. But also... the sun...

The sun couldn't reach her. There was no place for shadows.

Was this her plan this whole time? Did she plan the rooftop battle to lead to this? Was she already prepared? How long?

Dark Cutie looked around.

*Where is she?*

Snow White was nowhere to be found.

Was she hiding in the mist, waiting to attack? Why did she stall it out for so long?

Dark Cutie turned on the intercom.

"Annie, I need Snow White's position," said Dark Cutie.

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CALL YOU FOREVER!"

"I was busy fighting."

"Forget Snow White, we need to withdraw."

"Withdraw?"

"The boss told us to withdraw. We're not after Sachiko anymore. It's over, Leader. We have to go back."

"Impossible..."

"No, *you're* impossible! Mi-Chan's *dead* , okay!?"

"...What?"

"Yes. Now get back here and let's go back home."

"...I'll have to defeat Snow White first, so I can return safely."

"WHAT? That doesn't make any sense!"

“She might follow me back. I don’t know where she is. You were watching me, right? What’s her position?”

“She jumped down the rooftop with her fire extinguisher and ran all over the streets, spreading it all over the place. I lost track of her in the white smoke.”

“What!?”

*But why? Why do that?*

Dark Cutie looked down the edge of the building. She saw a trail of white smoke from the alleyways leading to the streets.

There were also plenty of civilians running around, walking around the streets in a crowd.

“Who’s the asshole that went crazy with a fire extinguisher?”

“Seriously, I thought something was happening!”

“Of course this happens in W-City...”

In the sea of people, it was hard to distinguish who was who... Which means...

Snow White spread the fire extinguisher and white mist throughout the whole city streets, then detransformed in the middle of the white smoke, blending into the crowd.

That’s when it hit her.

The rooftop, the fire extinguisher, the way Snow White was fighting.

The rooftop was a wide-open space. No walls for Dark Cutie’s shadows to get shortcuts from. Easier to fight against thanks to them only being constrained to the floor.

The rooftop also meant that Snow White could keep an eye on Dark Cutie at all times.

The roof itself was an apartment building, and they were fighting in a block full of apartments and department stores.

Snow White already had the fire extinguisher in mind, and in a wide-open space, the mist will spread farther to block out the sunlight.

Speaking of sunlight. Snow White must've chosen to leave at this time zone because it's closer to sunset. In time, Dark Cutie would've lost the light of the sun. She even took *that* into consideration in her strategy?

She wasn't fighting back because she wanted to buy time. Time for Sachiko to leave. She already had an exit strategy in mind as well. She had two. Either she uses the fire extinguisher, or waits for the sun to set.

She wasn't fighting blindly, but she also wasn't fighting fairly. She was using every single advantage that she had. She lured Dark Cutie to the one place where she knew she would be safe, no matter what happened.

The moment Dark Cutie accepted the invitation to fight on that rooftop, she had no chance of defeating Snow White...

*... I see. So this is why they call you the Magical Girl Hunter.*

Dark Cutie smiled to herself...

...Normally a hero fights fairly, right? So is Snow White not a hero for using tricks and surprises like that?

Well, Snow White emphasized her survival, and the survival of others as well. Despite her backup plans, her increased odds of winning.

Survival is important for a hero. If a hero dies, they can't save others.

Cutie Altair once said, in Cutie Healer Galaxy, episode 20, "No matter what happens, if you threaten us again, Dark Cutie, I *will* be there to stop you! I'll always be alive as long as you live!"

Yes. Survival was important. If only for the greater good. Snow White has survival instincts. A suicidal hero is no hero. That's just selfish desire for death, nothing heroic about that.

But a hero should also survive in the middle of the story. A hero that dies in the middle of a story is just a side character.

How can she follow Snow White?

*What should I do?*

“Annie. If I attack the civilians here. You think Snow White will respond?” asked Dark Cutie.

“...Leader, are you really thinking about doing that?”

“That’s what villains do, right? The bad things, so that the heroes defeat them?”

“It’s times like this I wish Mi-Chan were here to sort you out. Could you at least give it a rest for a bit... For Mi-Chan at least?” said Glassianne.

“Perhaps...”

Dark Cutie turned off the intercom and jumped down from the rooftops. The sun has already set. If Snow White didn’t escape then, she’d do it now.

Would Dark Cutie find her hero?

A villain is only a villain if justice came down to defeat them. A true villain has a hero to face, and that hero’s role was always to defeat the villain.

At some point, Dark Cutie will be defeated, in a glorious battle, where her hero will win the day.

## *Snow White*

Will that be the hero figure she's looking for?

Without a hero figure, Dark Cutie's role as a villain would be meaningless. Justice has to win in the end, and Dark Cutie has been cast in the role of the villain.

Without justice prevailing, what's the point of it all?

She walked the darkened streets alone that night. Dark Cutie placed her hands together. A shadow bat was created on the wall, illuminated by the streetlamp.

A mosquito was flying by. Dark Cutie's Shadow Bat ate the mosquito. A short life, but that mosquito's life was leading up to being killed by the shadow bat.

A villain is stronger than that. A hero should also be stronger than the villain.

Mi-Chan is dead. She was strong, too. Was Mi-Chan a suitable villain? She was smart, and certainly she can be very stubborn.

Those qualities fit better for both villains and heroes.

She does dirty work, so can't exactly be called a hero. Though, the way she carries herself is that of a hero, so she can't be called a villain either.

She does care for her team. She's not inherently evil, but she doesn't do good either.

People are hard to place in roles.

Whether or not she was a hero or a villain... Despite dying now... Mi-Chan was definitely worthy of the role of main character.

Dark Cutie ripped apart her shadow bat.

Dark Cutie turned on her Magical Phone. She accessed the Human Resources Division's files. She wasn't high enough to access the



restricted files, but she can always access the other Magical Girl files that were available for those of her rank.

After all, she still worked in HR.

Snow White.

She was a survivor in a selection test gone wrong. The administrator's name was the Forest Musician, Clamberry.

She was trained underneath Pythie Frederica, who had escaped prison after being arrested by Snow White herself. Frederica herself is now wanted.

She had single-handedly arrested a Mao's School graduate, Flame Flamey. Ah, so that's where the extinguisher came from.

She had also arrested a known rogue Magical Girl, Keek, and freed the Magical Girls trapped in her cyber world.

She had also contributed to the arrest of the Magical Girl known as Grim Heart. Shayta Osk Val Mer, one of the Three Sages. There were only three recorded survivors of that incident. Snow White, Deluge, and another Magical Girl named Marika Fukuroi.

Dark Cutie smiled. If Mi-Chan or Glassianne were here, they would say,

*"What? You're smiling? You feelin' alright there, Leader?"*

Or maybe

*“Leader’s finally smiling! I knew you’ve got it in you! Now go out there and socialize!”*

Dark Cutie chuckled to herself. She was smiling because she was happy. She was also proud of reading Snow White’s achievements.

She’s the one.

She’s the hero to Dark Cutie’s villain.

Snow White’s going to be the one to defeat Dark Cutie. In a climactic battle that will be remembered for all time.

This battle was only the first encounter. The next time, it’ll be a glorious battle. One that Dark Cutie knows Snow White will win. She’s only improving herself more and more.

She shut off her Magical Phone, satisfied. She turned on her intercom, and spoke aloud to it.

“Annie.”

“Leader? Oh thank goodness, I was just about to-”

“I’ll see you back at base. I’m withdrawing.”

“Eh? Huh? Oh... Y-Yes, I was about to say that, Leader. Of course!”

## ☆ **Premium Sachiko**

Sachiko had never wanted to use her powers.

In fact, she’d rather forget about anything related to her powers. Actually, she’d rather forget having those kinds of powers at all.

But forgetting something that causes trouble is also a sin.

So Sachiko can’t forget. It’s her duty not to forget it. She has to remember the horrible things that can be done because of her Magical Skill.

Every night, when Sachiko is asleep with her two sisters, she'd be the one to scream out at night, waking up from a scared nightmare.

Uluru would get mad and grumpy and start to yell at her too.

It doesn't matter how many times Uluru got mad at her though, because Sachiko felt like it was small compared to what she was capable of.

Sachiko has used her powers once.

They resulted in bad things.

She did those bad things. She caused those.

People say that forgiveness is possible for any slight. That you're able to forgive for any kind of sin, if the people had the heart for it.

But what Sachiko's done isn't something normal, or even light.

What Sachiko's done is unforgivable.

The first time Sachiko used her powers, it was due to curiosity. It was always curiosity. That's what drives people to do things they otherwise wouldn't.

Sachiko, Uluru, and Sorami became Magical Girls at around the same time. They were young children, and when they were taken in by Puk Puck they've lived together.

When they were younger, they started playing around with their Magical Skills.

Uluru would blurt out outrageous lies, and she would laugh because people always seemed to believe them.

Sorami would always show off that she can guess the contents of almost any box possible in the manor.

But Sachiko wasn't allowed to use her power. Even then, Sachiko didn't really understand how her powers worked. It was harder to explain, compared to her sisters' powers.

Fueled by your lifetime luck, you're guaranteed to be lucky for one thing in your life. How much luck can you pour?

So many questions went unanswered for so long. Sachiko herself had to keep watching Uluru and Sorami playing with their magic, while she had to sit this one out.

It's boring if Sachiko was told to stand there in the sidelines while Uluru and Sorami got to play with others.

And she was so eager, too.

There were only a few things that Sachiko understood about her magic. She had to produce some kind of contract that the target would sign. That's all she knew, really.

Back then, Sachiko, Sorami, and Uluru were together, and there were so many other children of her age as well, playing happily.

All of them were Magical Girls.

Puk Puck would praise every one of them, boasting to everyone she knew about how wonderful they are.

Puk Puck told them to be proud. Be proud that they're Magical Girls. Be proud of who they are and what they can become.

And yet, those words, taken to heart, only raise questions about Sachiko's conditions.

The other children were confused, and sometimes even scared of Sachiko. Some of them shunned her on principle. If you were supposed to be proud of your powers, why is Sachiko not showing off hers?

That's when Sachiko began displaying signs of shyness. She distanced herself not by choice, but because she was the odd one out. The only Magical Girl that wasn't allowed to use her powers.

While everyone was making friends, Sachiko was sitting it out in a corner alone.

It took a while for Sachiko to actually make friends with someone. However, some people did arrive.

First, Sorami, who gave Sachiko a chance. Then, Uluru, who also became close later on. Her future sisters.

They were her first few friends. They helped her make new friends too. After they became close and were taken in as sisters, Sachiko became a bit more open.

She met two other girls, who were kind enough to approach her for friendship.

These Magical Girls played with Sachiko, and got close to her.

“So you can’t use your magic?”

“Aw, that’s too bad, Sachiko.”

“Well... I can, but Lady Puck won’t let me,” said Sachiko.

“Then let’s use it, then!”

“Yeah, try it out on us! We’re good with it!”

“But... if I use it, Lady Puck will be mad at me!” argued Sachiko.

“No she won’t! It’ll be fine, we’re okay with it, Sachiko.”

“If Lady Puck’s mad, we’ll apologize together, okay?”

And so, Sachiko, whose fears were calmed by the words of her two friends, decided to give it a shot.

Sachiko didn’t really have any big ideas, since she was still a kid, so the other two children just wrote whatever they wanted to test their luck.

Apparently, only a few days later, they got their wish in the contract. By some sheer amount of luck, they managed to do what they thought was impossible.

Sachiko’s magic worked, and Sachiko was happy for that! The two and Sachiko continued on their daily lives.

That is, until the day came when Sachiko realized the other half of her magic.

One day, home from school, one of Sachiko’s friends was suddenly hit by a falling meteorite. There was news of a meteor shower, but none were expected to hit the atmosphere.

At about the same time, her other friend, who was in a library, was suddenly killed when a train came crashing through the walls. Nobody on the train died, only Sachiko's friend.

Their last moment of their lives was like some kind of gag comedy. It's something you'd put in the headlines of the 'Weird Deaths' corner on the newspaper.

To someone who didn't know these people, they might laugh at how ridiculous the deaths were. To Sachiko, however, these deaths were caused by her and her alone.

They were also people close to her, so she can't exactly laugh it off.

She killed her friends. She was warned not to use her magic, but she did it out of curiosity, and now her friends are dead.

Even if Lady Puck told her it's not her fault, they still died because they used Sachiko's magic. There's no denying that.

When Sachiko used her magic, people will die.

It's better if Sachiko never does her magic in the first place.

On the way back home, Uluru and Sachiko had been endlessly arguing. Well, it was more like Uluru shouting at her, while Sachiko tried to explain that she didn't want to do the ritual.

They're now separated from Snow White, but still together once more.

"Y'know, Sachiko... You should believe in Lady Puck. She does care about you. Don't listen to any other girls, okay?" said Uluru.

"I don't... I know Lady Puck cares. I still don't want to do it."

"Why?"

"Because it doesn't matter what they'll use me for. When I do my magic, I kill people. There's no exceptions to that," said Sachiko again, with a defeated voice.

“Puk Puck told me that the ritual involved some kind of machine, not a person. Your powers work for anything as long as they sign the contract, right? Machines dying don’t matter, Sachiko.”

“I just... I just don’t want more people to die,” said Sachiko.

Uluru sighed. But she did nod, and she stopped in her tracks.

“Okay. I understand,” said Uluru.

She grabbed Sachiko’s shoulders and gripped them tight.

“How about this. When we get home, I’ll ask Lady Puck about the ritual. I’ll ask if it’s safe for you. I’ll ask if there’s any risk involved. If there’s any chance of risk... Then I’ll take your side, okay? I’ll oppose,” said Uluru.

“Y-You don’t have to...”

“I might get in trouble, but if it eases your fears, it’s worth it.”

“I don’t want you to get in trouble because of me,” said Sachiko.

“You’re my sister, Sachiko. My job is to protect you. That’s what I’m doing. I don’t care who’s on the other side. If they wanna hurt my sisters, they’ll have to go through me,” said Uluru.

Sachiko was stunned.

Uluru smiled.

“I’m sorry about earlier. It’s just... Sorami and everything... I had a lot on my mind.”

“I understand,” said Sachiko.

“Don’t ever think that I don’t love you, okay? You’re family, and that’s what matters to me, Sachiko. So let’s go home, okay? We’ll think about this later,” said Uluru.

“What if it really is dangerous. Where do we go?” asked Sachiko.

“We have Snow White. If the ritual really is dangerous, we can go with her for the time being.”

Sachiko looked at her sister. She smiled, feeling safe, and nodded.

## ☆ Uluru

Uluru sent a text message to Puk Puck. She explained that she and Sachiko are now travelling back home, and that they're okay.

She told her that they separated from Snow White a bit, but last they saw her, she was okay.

Uluru waited for a reply. It came almost immediately. The reply mostly expressed how Puk Puck is glad that they're safe.

Puk Puck's face came to Uluru's mind. Her chest began to hurt. Uluru was gravely worried about Puk Puck.

She's served Puk Puck for many years, and Puk Puck's cared for her even longer. She wanted to repay her debt to her, for taking her in.

Uluru hoped that Puk Puck would be able to speak with them again. Oh, how she wanted to hear Puk Puck's beautiful voice again.

But luxuries like that will only shorten their lifespan. They have to be realistic, not romantic.

Uluru had already made a plan for outrunning the potential kidnappers of Premium Sachiko. A secret hideout by the beach. A local warehouse.

Snow White was never told of this location, but Uluru knew Snow White could find out with her powers.

Snow White should've already picked up on Plan B far before they were jumped by Dark Cutie. She would've read Uluru's mind. She would've known where to go. No communications means nobody but them knew their hideout. At least, Uluru hoped so.

Either way, the next step was to hide out from any other Magical Girls. If Snow White shows up in their hideout, that's good to know. If not, then they'll have to continue on their own.

Uluru and Sachiko took the back-alleys, the streets that weren't seen by anyone, and the sneaky pathways.



Sometimes they would hop on the train tracks. Sometimes they'd hitch a ride in the back of a truck. Either way, they need to get to their destination without moving too quickly, and without anyone seeing them.

Finally, they reached the safehouse. A warehouse that was marked 'D82'.

The smell of the sea filled the air, and the quietness of the night sky signaled that nobody was even around.

Uluru opened the door in the warehouse. She then invited Sachiko inside.

Puk Puck's message told her to retreat to one of the safehouses. She also said that there would be no reinforcements coming, despite her best efforts.

Uluru was a bit disappointed, but she understood. At the very least, Puk Puck's hold on W-City was vast. This was her territory, so a lot of the locations here are usable for her faction.

Sachiko lied down on the floor. She was tired.

"Take a rest," said Uluru.

"Yeah... okay..."

"Not too shabby, right? I mean, it's not Puck manor, but we'll make it our temporary home, for a while at least."

"What do we do now?"

"We wait. If Snow White shows up, we can regroup. She's the fighter in our group, so she'll handle those things."

"Do you think she's okay?"

Uluru nodded. "Yeah, I think she can handle herself," she reiterated.

Several minutes later, a knock appeared on the door. The knock was in the same knock that Uluru worried about in her head.

Snow White.

She opened the door, and saw Snow White outside. Uluru nodded, and Snow White nodded back. After entering the warehouse, Uluru locked the door shut.

Snow White decided to stay. It seems she really hasn't abandoned them. That's good.

When she entered the warehouse, Snow White didn't even spend a moment for rest. She began to think about their next move.

Suddenly, Snow White's eyes widened. She seemed to stop moving. Her head was looking around.

Uluru was confused, but perhaps she detected someone?

### ☆ **CQ Angel Hammer**

Hammer was thinking. Over and over again, she was thinking.

She kept thinking for the entirety of this whole situation. Forced into a corner with limited resources.

At times, she was already prepared to just give up. However, giving up was never an option for Hammer.

W-City has presented Hammer with one of the greatest military puzzles that she's ever faced.

Still, Hammer knows her limits.

There are things that are possible, and there are things that are just impossible, or downright suicidal.

With the number of Shufflins she has now, there's little she can do for a military advance. She had already resigned that option thanks to a certain Magical Girl.

## *The Shufflin Hunter from Hell*

They say the lowest layers of hell were filled with ice, and this Magical Girl has an ungodly amount of hatred for the Shufflins. So much so that she'd risk anything just to kill them.

Obviously impossible to negotiate with, Hammer found out too late.

All she can do is give instructions to the essential Shufflin to run away, but even then, she couldn't save all of them again.

The enemies of Osk have overrun W-City. There's no place for Hammer to seize control anymore.

It's already impossible to secure a victory from a position like this.

But there might still be a way to secure the objective. Premium Sachiko can still be eliminated, or at least taken away from the Puk Faction.

There's no way Hammer's going to return to Osk with this failure. She'll lose her head. Literally.

If she can't bear fruit here, the least she can do is sow the seeds for the future.

She rocked in her chair, and she got up, floating across to the rooftops. Night has fallen, and the headlights of cars can be seen as they scatter across the streets.

One of the surviving Shufflins reported to her on the rooftops, and Hammer nodded, dismissing her.

She picked up her radio.

Who to contact? What to say? She swung her feet down as she sat on the edge of the rooftop.

She turned it on.

Her target, Snow White.

She's seen her before from a distance using her binoculars back at the amusement park, hence she can set her frequency to her.

The only problem is what to say.

She brought the microphone close to her mouth.

“Hello, hello? Come in... Can you hear me?”

Of course she can. Hammer’s magic guarantees that. She can hear her no matter where she is or how far she is.

“Right now, I’m speaking into your head. Don’t bother looking around for me. Also, I can’t actually see you, unfortunately. It’s a lot better to speak when you know what the other party’s reactions are.”

Hammer chose her next words carefully.

“I’m the general leading all the Shufflins in W-City. Oh, before you get alarmed. Don’t worry, there’s no Joker involved, so you don’t have to worry about restocks.”

She had to calm any worries that Snow White might have.

Hammer wished she could see Snow White now. She had no idea on what Snow White’s reactions are to her words, so she couldn’t gauge what to say next.

She just had to rely on intuition and goodwill.

“This is my magic. I can communicate telepathically to someone. Even if you close your ears, I can still talk, because my voice is transmitted to your head. Also, in case you’re talking in there, I can’t hear you. Unfortunately, my magic only goes one way. I want to make one thing clear to you, I mean you no harm,” said CQ.

This wasn’t a lie. Hammer didn’t like telling lies. Lies are easy to detect by anyone with the skills to detect them. Hammer truly didn’t plan on fighting Snow White this day.

Hammer also knew who she was dealing with.

*The Magical Girl Hunter .*

Talking with her made Hammer a little nervous, thanks to her track record. However, this was necessary.

“Actually, I wanted to offer an alliance the other day. I was thinking of potential candidates to do so, and you were one of them. Unfortunately, it’s impossible now. I’ve decided to withdraw. With my strength, there’s no way for me to win without dying. My bosses won’t like it, but I’ll think of something.”

Hammer already gave her background information. She was now getting to the point of it all.

“I know that you were crucial to defeating Grim Heart. In case you didn’t know, Grim Heart was the current incarnation of the Osk Faction’s leader, Shayta Osk Val Mer. That’s actually quite impressive, if I do say so myself. Her defeat also provided us with valuable data.”

Thinking about Grim Heart. Despite being her leader, Hammer couldn’t help but despise her. Everything she did was reckless and beyond stupid.

She may be their leader, but she’s definitely not fit to be one.

Still, she was powerful, and actually defeating her is another task entirely.

So when Hammer heard that someone defeated Grim Heart, she would be the first one to keep track of that person.

“Osk’s incarnation as Grim Heart was meant to have the ability to ‘Ignore those she deems rude’. Her ability negates everything, unless she chooses not to. This incarnation was specifically created to counter a specific Magical Girl. That Magical Girl’s name is Puk Puck.”

Hammer had seen that Snow White belonged with the Puk Faction now. However, Snow White had no history of being in the Puk Faction before.

According to her sources, it was temporary employment.

“I think it’s best I explain to you in detail. Since the beginning, there were times when the Three Sages were either cooperating or at war with each other. Their Factions are each equipped with powerful Magical Girls who lead them. Those Magical Girls would sometimes come into conflict, and would send representatives whenever they negotiated something.

After all, no Sage wants to be caught in the open with their real body. Incarnations aren't something easy to achieve. They require time and resources. However, the Puk Faction never sends negotiators on their behalf. Instead, they send their real leader, Puk Puck herself."

Hammer paused for a bit. She began breathing a bit rapidly. She remembers this part of the tale well.

"Every time we send someone to negotiate, they come back and Puk Faction gains more than what we do. We always get the short end of the stick and our negotiators always say it's a fair deal. They speak highly of Puk Puck as well. I should know this... Because..."

Hammer rubbed her eyes, and her forehead. That image of her appeared in her head again.

"...I was once sent to negotiate with Puk Puck. I saw her. I saw her with my own eyes. What I saw changed me. She looked so innocent and pure, and almost everything she said was filled with kindness. It was... surreal"

Hammer still remembered Puk Puck's face. Hammer never thought of anything bad about her. When she saw Puk Puck for the first time, she understood why the negotiators were so willing to give her more.

Because even Hammer thought that Puk Puck deserved it. Her beautiful face and voice brought happiness to her, and she had the kindest smile that anyone could see.

Hammer shook her head.

"We've tried... thousands of times. We negotiated with her tens of thousands of times. I even... I even volunteered... Because I wanted to see her again. Every single time, we lose more than we gain. We've finally concluded that her Magical Skill, is to 'Twist the impressions of others'. That was our hypothesis."

How did Snow White react to this? Hammer wondered, but continued speaking again.

"It doesn't matter... how much slander you hear of her, or how rude you think she is. Once you see her, it's over... Her magic activates on your

sight. Every word she says to you. You feel like you're being praised. You'll feel like you're being honored. You'll adore her. You'll grow to love her. That's why we could never win. That's why she always had the upper hand on these meetings. Even if you were her worst enemy, once you see her, you'll be her closest friend."

Hammer didn't want to remember her face, but she did sometimes. Her feelings were real, so it's not as simple to forget.

What did Snow White think now? If Snow White saw her, then would she even listen to a word Hammer said? Hammer was from an enemy Faction. It'd be easy to just dismiss her entirely.

Hammer shook her head again.

"The scary part is... It's not just her powers. She puts in work too. Her words, her actions, her kindness is only amplified by her powers. She feels nothing but love for her subjects, but at the same time... That's why I know your powers won't work against her. Reading her mind, you'll only find caring words, you'll only solidify your trust with her," said CQ.

A Shufflin approached her. Hammer nodded, signaling that it was time to withdraw for the time being.

"That's why I tell this to you now. Be careful. Any empathy, any trust you have in Puk Puck. That may be caused by her magic. I know this can be hard to take in... I don't fully know if what I feel for her is real or not, either... But please... don't make any rash decisions."

Hammer heard footsteps of the Shufflins. They were ready to go.

"Oh, right. I almost forgot. I wanted to tell you that many of the other people after Sachiko has retreated too. Think of this information as a sign of goodwill. I'm also withdrawing myself."

Three Shufflins approached Hammer. Hammer looked at them, nodding, walking along with them as they withdrew.

"Oh, and Snow White... If at all, in the future, you need any assistance. The Osk Faction welcomes you. I was in it for the cause, not the process. Grim Heart was a mistake. I hated her. I know what she did may leave

you with a bad impression, and I know I probably can't change that... But you have my assistance, both in myself, and the Shufflins I command, should you ask for it."

Hammer closed the communications.

Hammer told the truth. Hammer hated lies. It was easier for her to tell the truth. Nobody had to be deceived.

Right now, Snow White may already have been under the effects of Puk Puck's powers, but the seeds of doubt are enough to question their reality.

Puk Puck's powers can't be said to be mind control. It's a form of empathy generation. Your feelings for her are real, and her actions support your feelings for her.

Thus, Hammer still has a hard time talking about Puk Puck. Conflicting feelings of longing and the knowledge that all of it may be caused by her powers made it difficult.

It wasn't easy. It never is.

But even Hammer knew that something was off. W-City is Puk Puck's territory. Why hadn't she sent any reinforcements at all? Withdrawals of other forces also made Hammer on guard.

Perhaps the time to team up with Snow White will be sooner rather than later.

## ☆ **Snow White**

The voice disappeared. What that voice said, can Snow White believe it? She doesn't know anything about that voice, nor does she know anything about their true intentions.

Snow White has always relied on her powers to know a person's true thoughts and feelings, but if what they say is true, then Snow White couldn't even trust her own powers.



But even so, Snow White had read the hearts of all the Magical Girls in the mansion, and even Uluru, Sorami, and Sachiko outside of Puk Puck's mansion.

Also, Uluru, Sorami, and Sachiko both personified what they believed to be Puk Puck's teachings.

Sorami especially, who believed in the good of others, based on what Puk Puck has taught her. That was the one thing that solidified Snow White's trust in all of them.

Snow White was disappointed in herself, if that was truly a lie. She didn't need to be her old self. She didn't need to be naïve. It reminded her of how it could cost someone their life.

But Snow White wasn't naïve. She made sure. She was certain this time.

The Magical Girls in the mansion. Based on what their fears are, based on their worries, almost none of them were about Puk Puck.

But is it a side effect of Puk Puck's magic?

What was she supposed to believe?

Of course, the voice had some logic. Puk Puck definitely tripped Snow White's alarms, but it settled after she found out that everyone believed she was a kind and caring person.

But now that she thought about it...

...Why weren't there any reinforcements? Didn't Puk Puck want Sachiko back? Puk Puck definitely wanted Sachiko back.

Regardless of whether or not she felt about Sachiko, she was worried about Sachiko not returning, which would mean that she wanted her back.

So why not send reinforcements? Did something happen to her or was there something else in play here?

For the longest time, Snow White hadn't been troubled by her own feelings. She thought she could keep her emotions under control, by

suppressing them.

She didn't want to lose control again.

Was everything she felt all this time a lie? It can't be. She still trusted Puk's Faction, but... She couldn't help but to look closer.

Snow White held her armband tightly. Not again. She's not going to be swept by emotions and false hope again.

She had to look at everything from the facts. Piece together what's wrong, and what's correct. If she opens herself up, then it'll be worse if the same thing happens.

Snow White looked at Sachiko.

Ever since Snow White arrived here, Premium Sachiko had been silent.

Sachiko was shorter in stature than Snow White. She would crouch down, hiding herself from everybody else. It was this way in the amusement park as well.

Sachiko didn't want to be in the ritual. Snow White chalked this off to fear and uncertainty. But come to think of it, what exactly *was* the ritual?

Nobody in the Puk Faction questioned it, other than Sachiko, who ran away.

Puk Puck herself said that nobody would be sacrificed. There won't be any deaths this time, so why is Sachiko afraid?

Was she afraid due to cowardice, or was it because she sensed that something was wrong?

"You okay, Pon?" asked a voice from her side.

"I'm fine, Fal," replied Snow White.

"You sure? You kinda look a little out of it," said Fal.

"I'm fine."

Snow White didn't have time for doubts. Time is a limited resource, and if she didn't hurry, Dark Cutie might come back.

For now, Snow White had to stick to the original plan, and not think about it too much.

### ☆ **Blue Bell Candy**

Pfle, the Magical Girl in the wheelchair, was supposedly the Head of Human Resources.

She fulfilled success using her own connections and resources in the span of a few years, and climbed the ranks fast as well.

Blue Bell was a little bit jealous of that. Still, it's best not to put feelings before the person itself. There's plenty of things to talk about, after all.

Talking would actually be nice. Blue Bell didn't really have any gossiping friends, so it'd be a nice change of pace to get to talk to someone.

And of all people, it's a pretty famous person at that. Pfle of Human Resources.

Pfle was looking into Blue Bell's face.

In response, Blue Bell shifted uncomfortably, and looked away for a bit. Could be a little rude, but Blue Bell was honestly nervous.

"...I-Is something wrong?" asked Blue Bell.

"You're not a good liar," stated Pfle.

"Huh? Oh, yeah, of course not... I don't think lying's a good thing, so I doubt I'd be a good liar at all..." said Blue Bell.

"That's good. Lying isn't the only answer. The Research and Development Division really did find a good Magical Girl," said Pfle smiling.

"Eh? You know about me?"

"Of course. I work in Human Resource, after all. I have a database," said Pfle.

"Ah... right, of course."

Pfle rotated her chair, and she leaned back on it. She looked up at the night sky, the stars brightly shining everywhere.

“Isn’t it beautiful? The contrast between the city and the countryside? Modern lights mixed with natural lights? It’s a nice view living here,” said Pfle, leaning back and relaxing.

Even just talking with Pfle felt a bit mentally tiring to Blue Bell. The truth is, she can’t handle talking with higher-ups, or people that she looked up to, or people that were famous, or people in a high position of authority.

Whenever she does, she gets so extremely nervous that she becomes mentally tired.

When she was in elementary school, cleaning the office of the Principal’s Room, she didn’t want to actually *talk* to the Principal.

When the Principal congratulated her for her efforts, Blue Bell just smiled and nodded. Her body felt as tired then as it did now.

She might be less tired if Deluge was with her now. Unfortunately, Deluge isn’t here right now.

She also had a conversation with Pfle about something. What it was, she didn’t exactly know at all, but for some reason, Deluge then left on her demon wings and flew away, leaving Blue Bell here.

*“ Stay here. Watch over her. Don’t listen to anything. ”*

And so, Blue Bell waited with Pfle.

Truthfully, Blue Bell wanted to follow Deluge to wherever it is she’ll go. Blue Bell made that promise to herself, and she was a bit sad when she couldn’t keep it.

Maybe Deluge needed Blue Bell.

Maybe Deluge was in trouble.

Blue Bell didn’t want to think about things like that. Maybe she really should converse with Pfle. It really is a beautiful night sky. The mountains were quiet and there were no cars streaming by.

It was only those two Magical Girls.

“Did you and Deluge meet at the Research and Development Division?” asked Pfle.

The sudden question hit Blue Bell a little close to home. Her heart shivered. She was afraid of what she had to say.

Blue Bell calmed down.

“H-Huh? Um, yeah... Yeah we did.”

“Is that why you’re working together?” asked Pfle.

“Because I don’t want to leave her alone...”

“I see. But then, it’s an interesting team you’ve got there. An outsider and a Land of Magic official, isn’t it?” asked Pfle again.

Should Blue Bell not have said anything? She trembled. She didn’t know what to say. She was at a loss for words. Maybe she can take that back.

“W-Wait... I... I never told anyone else... about me and Deluge,” said Blue Bell.

“Of course. Because you’re not a liar.”

Blue Bell felt relieved.

Pfle was the head of Human Resources. With only a few words, she could end her career if she wanted to. Blue Bell wanted to stay, so she could help Deluge.

“Um... I wanted to ask you something, actually,” said Blue Bell.

“Hm?”

“Do you know where Deluge went? Do you know if she’s coming back?”

“Whether she likes it or not, she’s going to come back. Currently, Deluge is sensitive to danger, and wherever she goes, she attracts it everywhere. Though, she’s going to come back. I believe that.”

“...You talked with her right? Do you know where exactly she went?”

“If I tell you, that damages the trust Deluge placed on me,” said Pfle.

“But she’s going to danger, if she’s going somewhere dangerous, I need to know,” said Blue Bell.

“Sadly I don’t know where it is myself. Deluge knew what to say, and she didn’t tell me enough for me to find out,” said Pfle.

“Ah... I see... Sorry for asking.”

Pfle nodded silently, and looked up at the sky again.

In the moonlight, Pfle’s figure actually looks quite elegant, if it weren’t for all this chaos going around right now.

“Ah, they’re here,” said Pfle, smiling.

“Who’s here?”

“Do you hear that?” asked Pfle with a glance.

What Blue Bell heard were bird noises. From the forest, various chirping sounds and squawking. Birds fluttering about.

Blue Bell isn’t a bird expert, so she couldn’t distinguish between noises. She heard cawing, though.

“Birds?”

“No. Not birds,” said Pfle.

From the sky, two Magical Girls dropped down to the ground below. The impact made Blue Bell yelp out in fear.

She jumped back and clung to Pfle.

Then she recognized the Magical Girls. The dark suited one, Dark Cutie, and the glasses one, Glassianne.

But where’s the scholar? Where’s Mi-Chan?

“What happened to Mi-Chan was a shame,” said Pfle.

Dark Cutie nodded. Closing her eyes.

Glassianne looked down. “Y’know, I really thought that Mi-Chan would be the one amongst us to live longer. She wasn’t the weakest of the group, like me. She wasn’t the strongest like our Leader. So I just... I wasn’t expecting her to go so soon,” said Glassianne.

Pfle nodded silently.

Though Blue Bell is the outsider, she felt like she was listening in to something she shouldn’t be listening in to.

She let go of Pfle, and began holding her own hands, slightly shivering.

“Where’s Deluge?” asked Glassianne.

“She’s checking in on someone important,” answered Pfle.

“Someone important? Someone more important than our target?” asked Glassianne.

Pfle smiled in response.

For some reason, Blue Bell saw a tinge of frustration and sadness in that smile. Though Pfle kept smiling.

Glassianne’s face became serious, and Dark Cutie’s brows furrowed.

“We’ve been cornered and led on a wild goose chase with no hope of winning. If we want to turn this around, we’re going to have to think of a new approach,” said Pfle.

Glassianne didn’t seem to notice Pfle.

“Glassianne. I know you’re trying to follow Deluge, but leave her be for now. We still need to trust each other for this to even be called a victory, so let’s try to regroup and rethink our strategy,” said Pfle.

## ☆ **Snow White**

When they left the warehouse, it was still quite dark outside.

This was ideal. Dark Cutie would have trouble working in a place where she can’t generate shadows.

However, darkness meant that more Magical Girls could be hiding somewhere.

Throughout the night, Snow White had been strategizing this whole time. The plan was simple.

First, Snow White would trek back to Puck Manor by way of Public Transportation, to hide her tracks. Meanwhile, Premium Sachiko and Uluru would be inside Snow White's bag.

Snow White would then detransform and travel in human form.

Normally, Magical Girls don't detransform in these kinds of situations, but due to the way the plan was structured, it was the best way to transport these two without being seen.

Most Magical Girls would be killed instantly if an enemy Magical Girl found them in human form. Magical Girls can move faster than you can react as a human. That was the main reason that Magical Girls don't actually transform back.

However, in Snow White's case, she had Fal, a Cyber Fairy. She linked her transformation with Fal, and Fal can detect Magical Girls within range.

Fal's reaction time is about as fast as a Magical Girl, so Snow White should be safe so long as Fal automates the process.

If they get into a fight, Uluru will come out as backup.

For now, however, Snow White, as Koyuki Himekawa, will travel alone, with a bag, towards Puck Manor.

The main issue is whether or not Dark Cutie's tailing them.

The shadow hounds could be anywhere. Which is why they had to leave at early dawn, when it was still dark. There was no way for the hound to operate in a place with no light for the shadows to exist.

The danger lies in Snow White being unable to detect the shadows. Especially not Koyuki. Fal wouldn't be able to detect it either.

So long as they travel under the cover of darkness, they should be fine.



Trains.

Busses.

In N-City, there was plenty of busy transportation routes that Koyuki used to take before she became a Magical Girl.

The transportation in W-City in comparison was light.

Fal had experience in finding Magical Girls in a busy place like N-City, with all its different trains, busses, traffic.

In W-City, it should be far easier for Fal to do that.

Fal's radar was also pretty wide, ranging about 200 meters, so in theory, nothing should get past him in W-City.

Still, Snow White was cautious.

"Any sign of enemies?" asked Snow White.

"The only Magical Girls are you, Pon"

"You're sure?"

"Now why would I lie in a time like this, Pon?"

"Card soldiers? Black shadows? Demons?"

"Do you think the closer we get to Puck Manor, the more enemies we'll face, Pon? I'd say the opposite is true, since not many would survive in enemy territory, Pon."

"Perhaps. I just don't want to have to fight if I don't need to."

"Snow White, it's okay! I've got this, Pon!"

That voice the other day did say that almost every side had withdrawn. Was she speaking the truth about that?

Koyuki kept walking and walking. Eventually, she closed into Puck Manor. She encountered almost no enemies on her way here.

She walked very naturally, like a person in a rush, but not too fast either.

"No reaction, Pon!"

“Nothing? Barriers? What about barriers?”

“Nope. There really is nothing, Pon!”

“Your radar works, right?”

“If any Shufflins come, or any demons, or anything at all, I’ll detect it, Pon!”

It’s kind of strange. Koyuki expected to encounter resistance as she approached the manor, but having nobody ambush her was also a nice change of pace.

Of course, the closer she got to Puck Manor, the faster she walked.

“Don’t let you guard down, Snow. Keep walking at a steady pace, Pon.”

“Understood. Sorry.”

Don’t run. Walk.

Her mind is in a rush, but her body needs to stay calm. Carefully, she continued walking. Earlier in the warehouse, she had asked Fal to send a message to Puk Puck should they approach the manor.

*I’m headed back. I have Premium Sachiko .*

A short, simple message.

Since reinforcements didn’t arrive, Snow White had to do it the hard way. She’ll drop off Sachiko at the manor, and be off with it.

“No Magical Girl reactions... No Magical Girl reactions... Ah? A Magical Girl is running straight this way, Pon!”

Fal transformed Snow White.

Uluru jumped out of her bag.

Together, the two ran, as fast as Magical Girls could run. The white walls of Puck Manor were just within sight.

Premium Sachiko can finally be returned as well.

But Snow White then noticed something. She slowed down. From running to walking.

“Wha? What are you doing!?” asked Uluru.

Snow White’s eyes widened. There was a Magical Girl behind her. About 10 meters away, wearing something very familiar.

A Magical Girl that Snow White knows very well.

High wooden shoes.

Shuriken hair clip.

A ninja costume.

Left arm cuff floating in the wind.

*You’re supposed to be missing .*

Illuminated in the streetlights was a Magical Girl that Snow White has been looking for all this time.

She was smiling.

A nostalgic face. Nostalgic memories came back to Snow White.

Snow White took a step forward to the girl.

The one-armed ninja, *Ripple* .

“It’s been a long time, Snow White,” said Ripple, smiling.

Fal appeared besides Snow White.

“Snow White? Is that really Ripple, Pon?”

Snow White nodded.

“...It’s you... It’s really you... It’s Ripple, Fal... I hear her heart’s voice. It’s her!”

Snow White ran over to Ripple. When she got to her, she smiled and hugged her old friend.

Ripple gently stroked Snow White’s hair.

“Ripple... Where have you been? All this time, I’ve been looking for you! Where have you been!?” asked Snow White.

“Sorry I’ve been away Snow White. But now, we’re finally together again,” said Ripple, still stroking on Snow White’s hair.

Uluru ran in behind her.

“Fal, who is she!?” asked Uluru.

“She’s a close friend of Snow White, Pon. She’s been missing for quite a while, Pon!” said Fal.

Uluru’s eyes were that of confusion.

Ripple looked at Uluru, with a smile, she stopped stroking Snow White’s hair. In a flash, her hand grabbed for her shortsword, and she thrust it into Snow White’s bag.

Then, she pulled out something from inside.

Premium Sachiko was dragged out with one arm, blood leaking from her neck, her face had the eyes of fear.

Snow White was stunned.

Uluru screamed.

*Ripple!? But... I heard your heart’s voice... I heard it...*

“Ripple... Why? Why!?”

Ripple’s face was that of a smile. But her actions were not that of the old Ripple. What happened to her?

Uluru rushed forward and tackled Ripple down. Ripple reacted by swinging her shortsword at Uluru, but Uluru blocked it with her gun butt, disarming her. She then grasped Ripple’s throat, and began punching her on the ground.

Her face was redder than it ever was, filled with tears of anger.

Snow White came over and restrained Uluru, pulling her away.

“Uluru, Ripple, STOP!” shouted Snow White.

“GET OFF ME!!!” shouted Uluru.

Uluru slammed Snow White's face with the butt of her popgun. Snow White was stunned and fell down backwards.



Uluru was then tackled by Ripple from behind, but Uluru managed to roll off into a crouch when she landed.

Ripple ran straight for Uluru.

Uluru cocked her popgun.

She aimed. Her eyes were full of hatred and anger.

***BLAM!***

“ARGH!”

Ripple’s leg was bleeding, shot by one actual bullet that caused her to crash and tumble forwards.

Snow White rushed to Uluru and held her down.

“Uluru, calm down!”

“YOU DON’T GET TO SAY THAT! SHE KILLED MY SISTER!!!”

Snow White looked at Ripple’s expression.

It went from anger, to shock, to realization... Ripple looked at the corpse of Sachiko, lying in a pool of blood.

Ripple looked back into Snow White’s eyes. Ripple’s eyes were that of fear now. She breathed rapidly. She got up, and she began to hop away.

Snow White heard Ripple’s heart.

*I can’t be with Snow White anymore*

What’s going on? What’s happened to Ripple? Why did she do this?

Uluru broke free of Snow White’s grip, and ran over to Sachiko. Premium Sachiko had already been detransformed back to human, lying in a pool of blood.

“SACHIKO! SACHIKOOO!!!”

Uluru knelt down crying on her as she hugged Sachiko’s body. Snow White approached the body as well.

“Uluru... I’m sorry... I’m so sorry...”

“Why did you stop?”

“I...”

“WHY DID YOU STOP!?”

Snow White couldn’t answer. This was her fault. Someone died because of her carelessness. She let her guard down.

Uluru cried, and hugged Sachiko close to her.

“WE NEED MEDICAL HELP! HELP!!! Fal, can you call someone!? Please!!!” asked Uluru.

“I can try, Pon!”

Uluru listened to Sachiko’s heartbeat. It wasn’t there anymore. It was gone. Her body was cold as well.

“No, no, no, NO!!! Not after I promised... No, Sachiko... Sachiko... SACHIKO!”

Snow White’s breathing became heavy. She felt tears streaming down her eyes as well. She failed Uluru.

She’s failed.



# Interlude

## ☆ Shadow Gale

Shadow Gale and the Armor Magical Girl reached the bonus stage, and used plenty of free warp points.

These are things you don't usually get if you're a beginner of this game.

Which means that the Armor Magical Girl is very intelligent. She's just incapable of speech.

Shadow Gale pretended to just be purely enjoying the game. Of course, she really did get immersed in it sometimes, but she didn't forget her original goal of escaping.

To do that, she needed something to remodel, and she can't remodel the TV if the Armor Girl is constantly on the watch.

Shadow Gale can modify machines using her magic, but she needs to be touching it, and doing that with the Armor Girl is practically giving away her need to escape.

As long as the Armor Girl stays, Shadow Gale can't be free.

Will Armor Girl ever leave?

If not, how can she get her to leave?

If the game ends, or if they die in the game, Armor Girl doesn't give up. She just keeps continuing after every game over. Learning from her mistakes.

She doesn't get frustrated easily, and her patience knows no bounds.

On the screen, two characters were firing fireballs while swimming in an underwater stage.

Shadow Gale had a thought.

She looked at the game console attached to the TV. It's an old game console, the kind that breaks easily.

If Shadow Gale broke it, she could make an excuse that she's trying to fix the console, then she can easily remodel it and the TV.

How would Shadow Gale break it?

Shadow Gale noticed the controllers, plugged into the console. If Shadow Gale pulls on it, the console gets pulled a bit too.

Armor Girl was too focused on the game, so Shadow Gale can pretend to be *really* passionate about the game, and swing the controller wildly around.

Shadow Gale's magic is to remodel machines. That means she can also fix them, so a broken console would easily be fixable... and modifiable.

Then Shadow Gale can finally be saved!

She pretended to enjoy the game, playing until they reached the final boss of the area.

Shadow Gale also has gotten used to the game mechanics. She's playing it like a natural already, so it wasn't hard to actually play it.

Magical Girl reflexes are suitable for action games like this. Kill enemies, avoid traps, beat the Final Boss.

Some awesome BGM played when they reached the boss area. A huge boss dropped down, with three times as much health than usual.

Armor Girl dodged the boss's attacks, stunned the boss, and threw a fireball at the boss' weak point. The color of the boss began to change and flutter. It signified that its HP was decreasing.

Shadow Gale simply avoided attacks. No reason to do a game over now. Armor Girl's got this.

Shadow Gale avoided the attacks by jumping off the platforms. Every time she did, she made an exaggerated gesture.

"WHOA!" she said, pulling the controller far to the right.

"WHOOOPS!" she said again, pulling the controller to the left.

Shadow Gale's body was also shaking left and right, trying her best to leverage her weight for the controller to be pulled.

Armor Girl tapped on Shadow Gale's shoulder. Did she notice?

Wait, no...

...She pointed to the screen, motioning Shadow Gale's character to follow her. She taught Shadow Gale the location of all the secret equipment.

Throughout the game, the Armor Girl always gave points to Shadow Gale. She showed kindness and genuinely cared, and Shadow Gale was going to abuse that kindness to escape.

The Armor Girl will be sad if that happens.

Shadow Gale didn't feel confident about her plan anymore.

But at the same time.

Her mother, her father, her friends, Kanoe...

...All of them will be worried if Shadow Gale is gone. She had to tell them that she's safe too.

Shadow Gale took a deep breath, and she motioned forward with her hands, reaching the game console.

Armor Girl grabbed Shadow Gale's hand.

"No, it's okay. The console almost fell, that's all," said Shadow Gale.

She realigned the console back, putting it safely in position. She then took the controller again, and played the game with Armor Girl.

They fought the boss together, and after a few minutes of trial, the game's ending fanfare played. They had won.

Then the game was paused.

Not by Shadow Gale.

It was the Armor Girl.

She looked around, and she stood up. What's going on? Was something happening?

Then Shadow Gale heard footsteps.

Someone's coming, and judging from the Armor Girl's reaction, it might not be friendly. Who was coming here?

The ice Magical Girl that captured her?

Someone else?

*BOOM BOOM*

A knock on the large metal door. Without waiting, the door was opened immediately.

# Epilogue

## ☆ Puk Puck

Has Premium Sachiko come home?

Was she captured... or was she killed?

Puk Puck wanted Sachiko to come back safely. She wanted Uluru to come back safely as well. She wanted Snow White to be safe too.

She wished for it, and she sincerely hoped they'd make it out alive.

This ritual was very important, and it's because of that importance that the Osk Faction keeps trying to interfere with her.

Premium Sachiko was also a big part of that ritual.

She needed to raise the probability of success to 100%.

Without Sachiko, the amount of lives that will be lost performing this will be great. With Sachiko, you only need her to succeed in the ritual.

She doesn't know what happened to Sachiko, but if she was caught or killed, Puk Puck will find the perpetrator and punish them.

Puk Puck wanted to assist Sachiko if she could. She loved Sachiko. She also knew that Sachiko would ensure the ritual's success.

She can't afford to lose her.

Otherwise, the ritual will be terrible.

If you think of the ritual as a machine, then there are several parts that you need to make it functional.

Puk Puck has prepared and acquired most of those parts.

Sachiko is only one of the parts required.

However, Sachiko is a very important part indeed. Without her, there would be no ritual.

No, wait, that's the wrong description.

Sachiko isn't an important part.

She's a required part.

It might be hard to notice the difference, but an important part is something you can live with, if you can find several replacements.

Without a required part, the machine won't work.

Necessity and importance are two different things.

Right now, chaos has descended upon W-City. Almost everyone involved except for Snow White were required parts.

Puk Puck had tried to find them. To find Sachiko, and follow their whereabouts.

She poured all of her resources, her money, her people, to ensure that she could find them. She poured those resources to get Snow White in the first place as well. She even poured resources to find other parts necessary even *after* hiring Snow White.

But sadly, Sorami had died in the chaos.

It was selfish to want both of them to survive. Greed is never good.

The Old Man once said that, too. It's better for everyone if they work together to accomplish a greater goal.

Puk Puck has always tried to live by what the Old Man has taught her. The individual is important, but a group effort leads to success.

This was Puk Puck's philosophy.

She had made everyone happy too. The ritual was about to begin. She was about to thank everyone for all their hard work, before all of this happened.

But now, everything seems to be missing, and everything was taken away from her.

The Land of Magic isn't what it used to be.

Chaos sparks everywhere.

Rebellion in small but powerful bursts.

The ritual is the way to save it.

Is Sachiko back yet? Puk Puck is getting worried every second. She shouldn't think about it too hard. It'll stress her out.

Uluru might get angry at Sachiko. Sachiko was cowardly, so she tends to run away. The poor girl.

If Puk Puck praised Uluru, she was sure that Uluru would be in a happy mood again, and the sisters would be back to being friends.

Sorami would agree, but Sorami's gone now.

The car stopped, and Puk Puck arrived at her destination. She got out of the car, and suppressed her sad thoughts.

Instead, she put a smile. It doesn't matter if she smiled, but this helps.

It's been a while since she's used her powers at maximum potential. Puk Puck's always relied on her natural charisma and a low-powered version of her magic.

But at maximum strength, it doesn't matter if it was demons, or Man-Made Magical Girls.

She opened the doors. A sword Magical Girl and a cannon Magical Girl saw her, and they went down to their knees, kneeling at her. The demons didn't attack her.

She didn't let her powers get lower. There was someone here she needed to befriend.

She knocked on the door, smiled, and opened it.

"Hi there! I came to pick you up, Shadow Gale!"

## ☆ **Pythie Frederica**

Snow White has grown so much, yet there was still a trace of kindness and softness in her, that she only lets out once in a while.



Of course, when your past was built on dreams, prayers, and hopes, you're bound to be a person made of kindness.

These are usually the feelings that were fostered to other Magical Girls. However, with all of those Magical Girls, they didn't have the strength to improve themselves.

But Snow White still proved herself ideal.

She still worried about the lives of other people, whether they're on her side or not. Trying her best to save everyone while knowing that the world isn't all that pure.

She knows that if she kills, she crosses a line that won't justify her actions any longer.

The perfect balance for Pythie. The ideal Magical Girl.

Pythie wondered if Snow White would ever cross the line if she were tested. Would her future lie in her finally becoming what she hated, or will she persevere against all odds?

Pythie would often have to do the dirty work to test it herself.

She took a coffee cup in her right hand, offered by another Magical Girl.

"Enjoy."

"Ah, I thought you might've prepared a special blend for me."

"The Frederica Special? Knowing you, you'd probably want me to add some hair in that coffee, won't you?"

"No, that'd be a waste of hair."

"I see, so you value hair more than your food. Makes sense."

Pythie finished sipping the cup, placing it down.

The Magical Girl reached for Pythie's coffee cup, wanting to refill it, and with a loud ring, she accidentally broke the handle of the cup.

"How rude of me. I'll replace it."

"No, it's fine. I just stopped because of the heat. I can handle it."

Magical Girls don't mind heat or cold. Pythie didn't like her coffee super hot, but she won't get a burn from it.

"You're very humble to your hosts, Frederica."

"I try to be."

"Then let's get started."

The environment they're in isn't something you'd call elegant. It was concrete, and smelly, and there was leaking in the ceiling.

But it was still a place to talk. Somewhere they can plan.

The mystical blue Magical Girl took a seat and drank her own coffee.

Blue wasn't really good for Pythie's eyes. She preferred clothes that were elegant and dazzling. Pythie's outfit wasn't really that elegant, so she liked it when another Magical Girl had an elegant outfit.

But beggars can't be choosers.

"Even though our goal was to prevent the Puk Faction from retrieving Premium Sachiko, we can't exactly say that this was a successful mission."

"Mhm"

"Elimination of Sachiko should've been our last resort."

"Mhm"

"I can't tell if you're agreeing with me or if you're being sarcastic."

"The former, of course."

"Well, anyways, Shadow Gale has been taken by Puk Puck. The feint worked. It helps that she found Shadow Gale to be important too."

"Feint?"

"Was it not a feint, then?"

"Oh no, I believe you. I'm just making sure. After all, you're not the lying sort, Lazuline."

"Your praise fills me with joy."

“Now who’s the sarcastic one?”

Lapis Lazuline. The original Lapis Lazuline. Her plans were to stop the ritual being held by Puk Puck. In order to do that, they need to get rid of Premium Sachiko.

If possible, they wanted to capture her alive.

If not, then killing her was the next best thing. Because if she dies, the purpose will be achieved, though the loss of Sachiko would be great for everyone.

For that reason, Lazuline needed two forces.

An army, which was supplied in the form of Princess Deluge and the demons.

An assassin, which was supplied in the form of Ripple.

There also exists a weakness in Pfl. She had recently lost her memory and was easily exploitable after acquiring a certain someone.

She was vulnerable, and thus she’s easy to control.

Although they had achieved their goals, given what happened, they failed in executing their strategy.

Pythie took a sip from her coffee.

The Magical Girl in front of her, Lapis Lazuline, wasn’t to be trusted. Pythie wasn’t in the habit of trusting others.

However, their goals happened to be mutual for now, so they became partners.

Pythie enjoyed Lazuline’s company, but she’d hardly trust her with her own life. Pythie was also not too clear on the full picture of the struggle that’s happening.

The main goal has always been to stop the ritual.

The success rate of this ritual would plummet heavily with the disappearance of Premium Sachiko.

That ritual being the activation of a device left by the First Mage.

Using Premium Sachiko's extreme luck, they would be able to activate it without even trying. A once in a lifetime achievement.

With Sachiko missing, Puk Puck had to find someone else to potentially help with the ritual. That's when Shadow Gale came in.

Shadow Gale could modify the equipment to be usable. It wouldn't be as good as Sachiko's magic, but it was worth a shot.

"I suppose you could say that the decoy worked, and Shadow Gale was indeed taken. Enough for her to not be able to allocate resources to help."

"Did you not believe in Snow White? Did you not think she could find Sachiko? You should have more faith."

"She's proven herself capable and resourceful. Someone I'd like to recruit."

"It's too bad the Three Sages have the same idea."

The two Magical Girls drank their coffee.

"And what of Ripple?" asked Lazuline.

"She's a good girl. I've been able to share and teach her so many things. Unfortunately, there's just no more room for growth if she's under me. I'm afraid I'll have to let her go," said Pythie.

She took out an orange rapier. It had a pumpkin shaped handle, and it shined brightly on the light.

"If I scratch someone with this, Ripple's control will be lifted."

"I do have to say, your timing's impeccable."

"Timing?"

"You chose to remove control of her at the worst possible moment, didn't you?"

"I don't know what you're talking about. I chose the *best* possible moment. A character building moment, for both Snow White *and* Ripple."

"The moment *after* she committed a massive crime."

“The two can only grow from that experience. It was the best time to remove control,” said Pythie with a smile.

It is a bad habit, but Pythie was a Magical Girl built on bad habits.

She wondered what Snow White felt about Ripple’s true feelings. If only Pythie could know what she was thinking.

Pythie sheathed the rapier. Now, there’s no more Ripple by her side. The last time they met, Pythie was stroking Ripple’s hair, with Ripple smiling happily.

She’s going to miss that hair.

But it was worth the sacrifice. Snow White right now is like a blade. Unpolished, but deadly. Pythie will be her grindstone, and ensure she grows from this experience.

Both will gain something.

Snow White and Pythie’s relationship still hasn’t changed, so Pythie had to do it from a distance.

And yet there are those who wish to take Snow White for themselves. Like that Magical Girl, Dark Cutie.

Pythie will not let that Cutie’s selfishness steal Snow White from her.

Pythie took a sip from her coffee cup. The future of Snow White is on the line. For now, perhaps Dark Cutie *could* be useful as a tool of growth for Snow White.

Until then, Pythie will always be watching over Snow White, nurturing her growth, whether she knows it or not.